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History of religion in
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HISTORY OF
RELIGION IN ENGLAND,

*FROM THE OPENING OF THE
LONG PARLIAMENT TO THE END OF THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.*

✓ BY
JOHN STOUGHTON, D.D.

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CHAPTER I.

THE reign of George II. was of far more religious importance than is generally supposed. The settlement of 1688, with its attendant national liberties, though accepted generally after the death of Anne, was not finally and completely confirmed until the period on which we now enter. So long as the Stuart claims were unrelinquished, ecclesiastical, no less than political interests, remained really in a precarious condition. Had the rebellion of 1714 been successful, the Government of the country would have relapsed into a state like that which existed a quarter of a century before. Religious freedom would have depended on the Monarch's will, and would have been so shaped and controlled as to forward the designs of the Church of Rome. The same may be said of the rebellion of 1745. The old fires, not thoroughly stamped out, had continued to smoulder, until they burnt into a new and fiercer blaze, threatening an amount of mischief unapprehended at the passing moment. How near England was to a counter revolution, which would have overturned the work of William III., we shall see as we proceed. The Protestant welfare of the kingdom

was no doubt quivering in the balance, and for the full suppression of the revolt, Englishmen cannot be sufficiently thankful to a gracious providence. Then, and not till then, can the Revolution period, commencing about fifty years earlier, be said to have utterly expired, through the firm establishment of that liberty which has been growing broader and stronger ever since. No doubt, as I have said, the Toleration Act was generally accepted under George I., but it was not lifted above all danger of repeal until after George II. had finally overcome the Pretender. And the same reign becomes of still greater importance, estimated according to its spiritual incidents, when we turn to consider the opening of Methodism which then occurred, and which must ever largely demand attention from those who study the History of Religion in England during the last century.

George I. died in 1727, on his way to Hanover, and his son "reigned in his stead." The new Sovereign and the new Queen immediately left Richmond for Leicester Square, where the Lords of the Council assembled; and his Majesty took the usual oaths. The King is described by one contemporary as a "brave and honest man, of moderate abilities but good intentions;" and by another, Lord Chesterfield, it is said, that "he troubled himself little about religion, but jogged on quietly in that in which he had been bred, without scruples, doubts, zeal, or inquiry."* Scarcely ever acting on his own judgment, and having the highest respect for the judgment of his wife, it was a happy thing for him and the nation that her character combined intellectual ability, sweet dispositions, and a tolerant temper. Her literary accomplish-

* "Hist. MSS. Com.," Report IV., 525.

ments, and her powers of conversation fascinated her Court, especially the Whig Bishops, who admired her liberality, whilst her gracious manners made her popular with the people. She could discuss the subject of free will with metaphysical Divines, for she was a correspondent of Leibnitz ; she gratified those who were wandering out of orthodox paths, for she admired Dr. Clarke, and he admired her ; and to the Dissenters her accession was full of promise, inspiring within them hopes of augmented liberty. How far she forwarded the interests of spiritual religion is another question ; but whatever might be her power over King, Court, and Church, it was exercised in the most unassuming manner. She stooped to conquer. The story goes that she was not exemplary in her behaviour when attending Divine worship. "What fault do people find with my conduct ?" she asked William Whiston, whose learning, ability, and eccentricities seem to have inspired her favour. He replied, "The fault they most complain of, is your Majesty's habit of talking in chapel." She promised amendment ; but proceeding to ask with what other faults she was charged, he replied, "When your Majesty has amended this, I'll tell you of the next."* Addresses of impassioned loyalty poured in from all quarters, ecclesiastical and civil ; and the ministers of the three denominations are particularly mentioned as attending at Court, to express their attachment to the House of Hanover. They must have been gratified with the justice and charity expressed by the Monarch to his Council when he said, "I find among my subjects such national charity and forbearance diffused throughout the kingdom, that the National Church repines not at the indulgence given

* Art. "Whiston," *Biog. Brit.*

to scrupulous consciences ; and those who receive the benefits of the toleration envy not the Established Church the rights and privileges which they by law enjoy." Yet, at the moment when this gush of sentiment escaped Royal lips, and the vision of Hebrew prophecy, "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim," seemed to dawn upon the Royal vision, some of the courtiers must have regarded the speech as very poetical, and must have felt that the millennium was not so near as the King's words seemed to indicate.

Jacobites were dismayed. Hanoverians were exultant. Clouds gathered over High Church prospects, sunshine fell on Low Church views. The first Parliament, in the elections for which Whig Churchmen and Whig Dissenters worked hand-in-hand, was a perfect triumph. Most of the members were friends of the Government, and the great Whig Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, from the Treasury Bench, looked round on his numerous supporters with intense satisfaction. Parliament met in January, 1728. Convocation was prorogued to the 20th of March, when a further prorogation was proposed. But a member of the Lower House, before this took place, rose and remarked that his Majesty had in a late address referred to the repression of profaneness and immorality, and that it became the Church to point out what would effectually promote this pious design. He said it could not be deemed unreasonable for any dutiful son or servant of Church and State to loosen his tongue strings at such a crisis, and he gravely suggested that Deists and Socinians might be "struck dumb by the awful voice of Convocation."*

* "Historic Register" for 1727, 175.

and Convocation was not allowed to take up the subject.

Walpole's sincerity, as the advocate of civil freedom for all religionists, was before long put to the test. At the close of the summer of 1730 an agitation commenced respecting the repeal of the Test Act. Dissenters pleaded in support of the design their attachment to the principles of the Revolution, their loyalty to the House of Hanover, their past services to the Government, their zeal at the last election, and their self-denial in having patiently accepted a statute of exclusion rather than weaken the Protestant interest. Such a matter was publicly as well as privately discussed, and in 1732 Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's, issued a pamphlet in which he maintained that an establishment of religion is essential to a nation's welfare. If the existing one were abolished another must come in its place. Should an Act be passed to establish Presbyterianism, Independency, or any other form of ecclesiastical government, without question all peaceable subjects ought to submit. The public should sustain no other teachers, admit to public office no other persons, than those who were members of the Established Church, whatever that Church may be. If this be just reasoning, he contended that a repeal of the Test Act was inconsistent with the welfare of the National Church. Presbyterians, if admitted to office, would endeavour to establish their own sect, and would not tolerate Episcopalians. If all denominations were admitted alike, that, he said, would be less pernicious; for a jumble of principles might have the effect of contrary poisons mingled together, which a strong constitution would perhaps probably survive. But this alternative he dismissed, to point out various

inconveniences which would attend the establishment of a Presbyterian policy. Such an absurd argument as Swift's is not worth discussing. It does not appear that the publication had much effect, and only as a curiosity is it worth notice. The Government certainly had no sympathy with the Dean. They professed a willingness to meet the wishes of Dissenting friends, but they felt themselves hemmed in by formidable difficulties. They saw the justice of repealing the Test, yet they feared to offend the Clergy, who, like Swift, regarded it as a bulwark of the Establishment. To support the proposed measure would alienate Churchmen, to resist it would alienate Dissenters. Sir Robert did not like the horns of this dilemma.

The astute minister looked out for a policy, and found it. "Now is not the time; persuade the Dissenters to wait awhile." This was the drift of his advice. He called the Queen to his aid, and the Queen called Hoadly to her side. Graciously addressing his Lordship, she professed sympathy with him in the cause of liberty; but added, no doubt with much sweetness, "All times were not proper to do proper things," a maxim which, from a party point of view, could be urged on plausible grounds. The difficulties at that moment, the collision of interests, and the danger of offending High Churchmen, were points pressed on the notice of the Prelate. He had, however, the honesty to avow, that having set out in life with an attachment to civil and religious liberty, and having given pledges to that effect, he could not alter his position. But he added, and here was a loophole, if on feeling the pulse of the nation he found that the proposal at present would injure the Whig interest without promoting the interests of Dissenters, he would

endeavour by using his influence with Nonconformists to avert for a while the impending agitation. Rumour went abroad that the Queen had sent for the Bishop, and that the Bishop had been convinced the Dissenters' desire was unreasonable. Hearing this, Hoadly became angry, and went to Walpole, telling him that such a story would not forward any party plans, for he must think of his own character, and contradict the damaging report. Walpole treated what Hoadly had heard as idle talk, and professed great regard for his Episcopal friend; but, as to the main point, whether the Nonconformist scheme at that juncture should receive Ministerial support or not, the Bishop said his Lordship knew what he thought of the subject; the fact was, the firmest friends of the Minister believed that to introduce the contemplated Bill would arouse irresistible opposition, and therefore must not be attempted at that moment. Hoadly, however, wishing to make terms for the future, asked if he might give Nonconformists a hope of more favour whenever a new Parliament met. Sir Robert was too wary to give a pledge, and the Bishop went his way to do what he could to quiet his friends outside the Church.

Dissenters had begun to move. The ministers of the three denominations, in the month of October, 1732, resolved that it was advisable for a number of lay gentlemen to meet and consult as to what steps were fit to be taken next session with relation to "the Repeals," as they were sometimes termed. With this Committee the Bishop most likely entered into negotiations, certainly members of the Cabinet did so. Lord Hervey—not a very trustworthy reporter—speaks of the Dissenting Committee as composed of "moneyed men of the City and scriveners, who were absolutely

dependent on Sir Robert, and chosen by his contrivance." However that might be, the account given of the interview between the different parties is very amusing. "The Lord President looked wise, was dull, took snuff, and said nothing;" Lord Harrington, it is added, took "the silent passive part." The Lord Chancellor and the Duke of Newcastle had done better had they followed that example; but they both spoke very plentifully, and were both equally unintelligible.* The public announcement of the result appears in a newspaper called *The Courant*. The Committee reported to "the generality," as their opinion, that the repeal, "if attempted at present, was not likely to be successful. After long debates, the majority did not agree therewith, and moved to recommit that opinion." The London Dissenters were by no means satisfied with the way in which the matter had been managed, and forthwith determined that "each Dissenting congregation of the three denominations" should choose deputies to represent them; but when these deputies met in Committee, they resolved that an application at the next meeting of Parliament, for a repeal or explanation, was not likely to be attended with success. The agitation of the question ended for a while; but out of an election of Dissenting Deputies, sprung the important body which has ever since borne this well-known name; in our time it has witnessed salutary changes for which its early efforts, made amidst many discouragements, prepared the way.

Disappointment in 1732 was followed by a troublesome legal process, and by outbreaks of popular violence. In 1733, the Chancellor of the Diocese of

* "Hervey's Mem.," I. 157.

Peterborough—not out of any ill-will to Dissenters, as he professed, though his previous conduct had been uncivil, but simply to establish the authority of Ecclesiastical Courts—instituted a prosecution against a Dissenting academy at Northampton, on the ground which had been suggested to Archbishop Sharp.* “The wisest parties I have consulted,” said Philip Doddridge, the persecuted tutor, “look upon these proceedings as a very artful scheme to bring us under ecclesiastical inspection, more than we have ever been, and they think as I do, that it is trusting our academies and schools to the impartiality of a party which has not always shown the nicest honour, not to touch upon its integrity.” The question thus raised was taken into the civil court. Westminster Hall decided in the Nonconformist’s favour. The Judges ordered a prohibition, which it was thought would secure him from further trouble; but proceedings were continued. However, they were soon cut short by the disapproval of the Ministry and the interposition of the King. In September, 1733, the academy buildings were attacked by a Jacobite mob, ringleaders were apprehended and brought to justice, but it would appear that the Mayor of Northampton did not in the affair deal out even-handed justice. Other breaches of the peace, in connection with religious services legalized by the Toleration Act, occurred some little time afterwards, when a Dissenting student, preaching at Brixworth, had stones thrown at him through a window, and his friends at the same time were treated with indignity and violence.

At the end of the year 1734, there was a general election, upon which Walpole is said to have spent

* See Vol. V. of this History.

out of his own pocket, as much as £60,000. The result was not what he wished, for though he obtained a majority, it was smaller than before. Dissenters, no less than Whig Churchmen, promoted the return of members pledged to support the Minister; but when Parliament assembled, in January, 1735, the question of "the Repeals," again came on the carpet, only to be once more postponed. The Dissenting Deputies consulted with Walpole, who counselled delay, adding that as the Dissenters had more than once deferred to his advice, and in the late election had behaved so well, he would leave it to them to make the attempt the following session, should they think fit so to do. When the Committee took the matter in hand, they found that difficulties were raised afresh, and they were threatened with opposition from the very Ministers on whom they placed their dependence. It was at length resolved to make a desperate push; and on the 12th of March, 1736, Mr. Plumer, member for Herefordshire, one of the Opposition, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts. A rather long debate ensued, and the mover gained the support of friends to the Established Church, but Sir Robert made a wavering speech, and then voted against the measure. The motion was lost by 125 against 251, a result which the Committee of the Deputies expected, though, in deference to the opinions of friends, they had done their utmost to support the measure.* Whilst the Deputies were unsuccessful in reference to this object, they obtained redress in a few London parishes where Dissenters felt

* "Sketch of the History of the Proceedings of the Deputies,"

4. This book is my authority for what I have to say respecting them.

aggrieved, by clauses for the building of new churches, at St. Leonard's, Shoreditch; at St. Mary's, Rotherhithe; and St. Olave's, Southwark.

To prevent an unnecessary interruption in this narrative, I may anticipate a few years by saying that in 1738 the question of "the Repeals" once more came up, when the Deputies prepared a list of "reasons for repealing or explaining so much of the Test and Corporation Acts as relates to the taking the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as a qualification for offices." A copy was despatched to every member of the House of Commons, and again, in March, 1739, a motion was made to bring in a Bill to the effect now expressed. Who introduced the motion is not known, but there was a long debate; and the proposal being for a second time rejected by the Government, it was lost as before. Now 188 voted against 89. Yet after such a rebuff the Committee did not despair. They wrote to their friends to justify what they had done, saying that members to whom they applied for support acknowledged the reasonableness of the measure, and that to accuse them of distressing the Administration was unfair, as the motion was made and supported by approved members of the party. Probably the Dissenters had offended the Ministers on the former occasion, by seeking help from their opponents.

Returning to the year 1736; in the month of March we find a petition was presented from the Quakers for relief from the vexatious and expensive operation of tithe laws, through prosecutions carried on in the ecclesiastical courts. Leave was given to amend the laws for the recovery of ecclesiastical imposts. A Bill to that effect was framed. In case a Quaker should not submit to the decision of two magistrates, recourse

was to be had to the courts at Westminster. On a refusal to pay, the amount was to be levied by distress. The Bill was largely disputed in the House of Commons, and then carried by 164 to 48. From the Lords it met with a different reception. It was supported by Harrington, Hervey, Carteret, the Duke of Argyll, and Earl Hay; and opposed by the Bishop of Salisbury, the Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Hardwicke, and Lord Lovell. The Earl of Scarborough and Lord Bathurst also addressed the House. The debate turned upon no great principle, no idea was entertained of exempting Quakers from payment; the controversy simply related to legal proceedings, which, without being obnoxious to the Society of Friends, would secure their discharge of debts claimed on behalf of the Church of England. "Tythe," it was said, "is a tax which is now due by the law of the land, and must remain so; therefore the Quaker must pay it as well as every other man subjected to it by law. Nor does he desire to be absolutely free from it; he only desires, since his conscience will not allow him to pay it voluntarily and freely, that you would take it from him in the easiest and least expensive method."* Lord Hardwicke professed himself ready to help the Quakers, but he despaired of doing anything that session, saying the settlement of the question would require more time than they could then give to it, and at all events the Bill required much modification before it was fit to pass. The question of committing it was decided in the negative by 54 to 35. Fifteen bishops voted against it.†

In the same year, 1736, a Statute of Mortmain was enacted, which, reciting the mischief increased by large

* "Parl. Hist.," IX. 1181.

† Ibid., 1219.

and improvident dispositions of property on the part of dying persons for charitable uses, made it unlawful to give lands, or money for purchasing lands, unless the conveyance should be executed twelve months before the donor's death. "Charitable uses," included religious objects, and therefore the Act affected ecclesiastical interests. What could have induced this piece of legislation just then it is impossible to say. In the Middle Ages, when a large proportion of real estates were being swept within the grasp of ecclesiastical hands, there existed abundant reason for mortmain laws ; but in the eighteenth century, when benefactions of the kind were not at all common, it is difficult to perceive what could be the particular reason for fresh restrictions on the subject. The measure is called Lord Hardwicke's Act, and in a speech in support of it, he alluded to the possible danger of Nonconformist and Jewish endowments.

It is a curious coincidence that about a couple of years before the Act was passed, a wealthy Dissenter, to be noticed hereafter, contemplated an educational foundation, and in 1735 executed a will for that purpose, but as it did not provide for the purchase of lands, but only for the instruction of ministerial candidates, his scheme did not come within the scope of Lord Hardwicke's prohibitions. Lord Hardwicke, having been brought up as a Dissenter, and indeed educated in a Dissenting school, may be supposed to have come within reach of knowing what went on amongst old friends ; but in the trust to which I have referred there was nothing to alarm the mind of his Lordship, and it does not seem to have had any bearing on the particular evil which he sought to prevent.*

* I have to thank one of my intelligent correspondents for having called my attention to this subject.

Queen Caroline died in November, 1737, manifesting through her illness that sweetness of disposition for which her life had been so remarkable; except—and it is a sad exception—that to the last she refused to receive into her presence the Prince of Wales, who, being her own son, whatever might be his offence, had the strongest claim on her affection and forgiveness. She was buried, with some confusion in the service; but it is interesting to learn that Handel's anthem was sung for the first time at her obsequies: "When the ear heard her, then it blessed her; and when the eye saw her, it gave witness to her. How are the mighty fallen! She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces." *

Tidings reached London in September, 1745, that Charles Edward Stuart had so far succeeded in his attempt to secure the throne for his father, that he had entered Edinburgh in triumph and taken possession of Holyrood Palace. He had ridden down the High Street on his charger, wearing the white cockade, had been rapturously received by a large number of citizens, and had proclaimed James III. King of Great Britain. The possible ecclesiastical consequences of success in this rapid movement it is easy to guess. "Professing the Romanist religion, he might soon have been tempted to assail, at the very least he would have alarmed, a people jealous of their freedom, and a Church tenacious of her rights." † And in any case his reign must have proved a return of the Stuart type, for it could exist only by resting on the ruins of the Revolution of 1688. The religious excitement amongst certain classes in England, especially the Dissenters,

* Stanley's "Memorials of Westminster Abbey," 184.

† Stanhope's "History," III. 277.

who seem to have looked deeper into the question at issue than many of their fellow subjects, was therefore intense ; and it increased in a few days when news of the Preston Pans victory arrived, and the story was told of the death of the brave Protestant, Colonel Gardiner. Higher it rose, wider it spread, as the slow post brought to the metropolis intelligence of an advance on England, of the border being crossed, and of Carlisle being taken. From Carlisle the Pretender marched to Manchester, and thence to Derby. A battle was anticipated in the neighbourhood of Northampton, and the metropolis was threatened : yet the excitement even then was not universal, multitudes, strange to say, did not much care about it one way or another. With religious people it was otherwise ; they took a side, a few for, the majority against, the Pretender. Nonjurors and Jacobite Churchmen sympathized in the rebellion ; but on the part of moderate Tories, Whigs of different shades, loyal members of the Establishment, and the various Dissenting denominations, who identified the Pretender's cause with the interests of popery, there were zealous and earnest efforts to arrest the tide of invasion. Archbishop Herring exerted himself in the support of his Royal master. He gathered together volunteers by his persuasion, and raised a fund of £40,000 towards the public defence. Sermons on the duty of Protestants to stand by the throne were preached and published. Pamphlets by clergymen during the former rebellion of 1715 were reprinted ; and of course, when the struggle was over, and victory crowned the royal arms on the field of Culloden, churches echoed with thanksgiving. But amongst the supporters of the Government at that juncture, if not the most wealthy or the

most numerous, Nonconformists were the most active, and in their records are notices of "Solemn humiliation and prayers on account of the unnatural rebellion in Scotland." Dr. Doddridge was singularly active, and promoted the raising of troops in his congregation and neighbourhood. Also in September, 1745, the Deputies resolved that it be recommended to Protestant Dissenters to express their zeal and readiness to support his Majesty's person and Government in any legal way that might prove effectual.

In Lancashire sides were taken according to political predilections. The Nonjurors boldly came out in support of Prince Charles. Three sons of the Non-juring clergyman, Dr. Deacon, on their father's advice, and with their father's blessing, obtained commissions in the army of the Pretender. Members of his congregation, together with Roman Catholics and some orthodox Churchmen, became officers of the Manchester regiment. One of the first enrolled was no other than the "Jemmy Dawson," immortalized in Shenstone's ballad. An Oxford clergyman, teacher in the Grammar Schools, dressed in canonicals, accompanied a drummer as he went through the town beating up recruits. James III. was proclaimed in Manchester, and one of the chaplains of the Collegiate Church, in the presence of crowds lining Salford Street, offered solemn prayer for a Divine benediction on the daring enterprise. Sunday, March 30th, witnessed a grand gathering in the Collegiate Church. The Manchester regiment marched there under a banner inscribed with the motto, "Church and Country." The men wore blue, the officers Scotch tartan, all mounting the white cockade. Ladies in plaid ribbons, shawls, and mantles poured into the edifice. Charles occupied

the warden's seat, and the Oxford clergyman preached from the words, "The Lord is King, let the earth be glad thereof." There were no counter-demonstrations on the part of Presbyterians; but in Liverpool a regiment was raised in defence of King George by the pastor of the Baptist Church in Byron Street. The Manchester regiment soon broke up, having done no service, and the unfortunate clericals who threw themselves into the Stuart cause paid the penalty of rebellion at Carlisle and elsewhere. The heads of some were stuck on poles by the Manchester Exchange; and as long as they remained, Dr. Deacon raised his hat, and blessed God for the constancy of the sufferers, though his own son was of the number. This was denounced by a Presbyterian minister as "false worship in the Christian sense, but true Nonjuring and Jacobite devotion." The rebellion suppressed, Manchester overflowed with delight; orange ribbons immediately took the place of tartans and white cockades; and St. Anne's Church and Cross Street Meeting were now as brilliant in symbolical colours as the Collegiate Church had been before. Bells rang, bonfires blazed, and illuminations at night sparkled from the windows. Dr. Deacon could not unite in the general joy, but the heartless mob insisted upon his putting lights in his windows as other people did.*

Three years afterwards, 1748, when the nation had become quiet, and no one remained to trouble the House of Hanover, Gooch, Bishop of Norwich, preached one day in his fine old cathedral, and said, "that the leaders of the rebellion were Presbyterians, as appeared by the conduct of those Lords in the Tower, who, during their imprisonment there, sent for Presbyterian

* Halley's "Lancashire," II. 372 *et seq.*

confessors." There happened to be present the celebrated Presbyterian minister, Samuel Chandler. He was nettled at the allusion to Presbyterianism, inasmuch as Lord Lovat, one rebel who died on Tower Hill, was a Roman Catholic ; and Balmerino made no profession of religion at all, but only shouted, "God save King James," adding that he would lay down, if he had them, a thousand lives in the same cause. As to Lord Kilmarnock, who was a Presbyterian, he confessed the greatness of his crime.* On returning to London, Chandler wrote to the Bishop on the subject, complaining of the unfairness of the charge, which led his Lordship to return a civil answer, together with an invitation, which the Dissenting minister accepted. As they were talking together, conversation ran upon the subject of Comprehension, agitated long before, but now for many years fallen asleep. Some little time afterwards a meeting followed between Chandler and the Bishop, accompanied by Sherlock of Salisbury. What Chandler said, we do not know ; but Sherlock is represented as remarking, "Our Church, Mr. Chandler, consists of three parts, doctrine, discipline, and ceremonies. As to the last, they should be left indifferent ; as to the first, what is your objection ?" The substance of the reply appears to have been : "Your Articles must be expressed in Scripture words, and the Athanasian Creed must be discarded." Upon this, as report goes, both Bishops rejoined, in words once used by Tillotson in reference to that Creed, they wished "they were rid of it." They

* In the "Life of Doddridge," by Dr. Stanford, a letter is printed containing an account of the execution of Balmerino and Kilmarnock. Balmerino is described as seeming "to have no thoughts of a future state.

further professed that they had no objection to express the Articles in Scripture phraseology. "But what could be done," they went on to ask, "about reordination?" "None of us," remarked Chandler, "would renounce his Presbyterian ordination; but if your Lordship means only to impose your hands upon us, and by that rite recommend us to public service in your society or constitution, that perhaps might be submitted to." The two Bishops, at the conclusion of the interview, requested Chandler to wait on Dr. Herring, who had by this time succeeded Potter in the Primacy. He did so, and met once more with the Bishop of Norwich, when the Archbishop, finding Comprehension to be the subject under discussion, remarked, "A very good thing; he wished it with all his heart, and the rather because this was a time which called upon all good men to unite against infidelity and immorality, which threatened universal ruin; and added, he was encouraged to hope from the piety, moderation, and learning of many Dissenters, that this was a proper time to make the attempt." Upon hearing this, Chandler said he wished the Articles to be expressed in Scripture words, to which his Grace replied, "Why not? It is the impertinences of men thrusting their own words into Articles, instead of the words of God, which have occasioned much of the divisions in the Christian Church from the beginning to this day." He added, "the Bench of Bishops seemed to be of his mind; that he should be glad to see Mr. Chandler again, but was then obliged to go to Court." The account of this conversation rests on the authority of the Dissenting minister who had so remarkable an interview with his Episcopalian friends. How the conversation was reported on the other side,

we cannot tell ; but the opinions of one or two of the three Prelates were certainly such as to lean in what would be called a liberal direction. Still, it is more than a little surprising, that Bishops should go so far as this report would indicate ; and at all events Chandler was blamed for what he did. "Several persons," says another Dissenting Divine who has preserved the report, "were angry with him for his conduct in this affair, especially for an expression he made use of, on his second visit, when, urging the expediency of expressing the Articles in Scripture language, he said, 'It was for others, not himself, he suggested this—his own conscience not being dissatisfied with them as they now stood, for he freely owned himself to be a moderate Calvinist.'" * What exactly excited such anger, whether the profession of his own opinion, or his allusion to the opinion of others, does not appear ; but this appears, and it is worthy of observation, that anger did not proceed from any distinct objection to the idea of Comprehension altogether. That idea still lingered in some quarters, but there is no ground to suppose that a deep or a widespread desire existed in Nonconformist circles upon the subject. Baxter, Howe, and Calamy, who longed for something of the sort, were gone ; and the time for regathering Dissenters within the bosom of the Establishment had passed by, never to return. Soon after the interview between the Archbishop and Chandler, his Grace received a visit from Dr. Doddridge, who in the course of conversation suggested the possibility "of a sort of medium between the present state and that of a perfect coalition." It was, says Doddridge, "to permit the Clergy to officiate

* Wilson's "Dissenting Churches," II. 354.

amongst us if desired," involving "a counterpart of permitting Dissenting ministers to officiate in Churches." This struck Potter as "a new and important thought which he would lay up in his mind for future consideration." Nothing came of it; yet, however difficult Comprehension may be—this kind of intercommunion and interchange would involve no surrender of principle on either side amongst those who have common religious sympathies. As to Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and Methodists, they preach at the present time in each others' pulpits without offence or inconvenience. Only Episcopalians decline such intercourse. While changes in the Establishment were sought by different persons, the policy of the Whig Minister was to keep things as they were. "*Do not stir what is at rest*," was his politic motto. "Those at the head of affairs," said Warburton, "find it as much as they can do to govern things as they are, and they will never venture to set one part of the Clergy against another; the consequence of which would be, that in the intrigues of political contests, one of the two parties would certainly fall in with the faction, if we must call it so, against the Court."

Numerous changes in the Episcopate occurred in the reign of George II. Smallbrook, Bishop of St. David's, was, in 1730, raised to the See of Lichfield and Coventry, in consequence of Chandler being at the time translated from that See to Durham. In both appointments honour was done to learning; so it was, also, in the case of the antiquarian Tanner, raised from a Christ Church Canonry to the Bishopric of St. Asaph in 1731, and in the case of another antiquary, Maddox, promoted in 1736, from the Deanery of Wells, to succeed Tanner. In 1734 two

other appointments took place—that of Benson, a man of piety and worth, to the See of Gloucester and that of Hoadly, promoted from Salisbury to Winchester. Lavington was raised from a Canonry at St. Paul's to the See of Exeter in 1746, and Sherlock presided over London from 1748 to 1761. He had been opposed to Hoadly in the Bangorian Controversy, and it is said that Hoadly dreaded him more than any other opponent, for he was an eloquent speaker, and effectively addressed the House of Lords. His method of defending Christianity in the "Trial of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus,"—in which, after cross questions, he points out their harmony—may be taken as a key to his habits of thought; and his correspondence with Doddridge indicates his liberal and comprehensive spirit.* Zachary Pearce was raised from Bangor to Rochester in 1756. He had attracted Queen Caroline's attention as early as 1737, and was made Dean of Winchester two years afterwards. Attaining to the Bishopric of Bangor in 1747, he was transferred to Rochester in 1756, which he held in connection with the Deanery of Westminster. In 1768 he resigned the Deanery, sighing for a fuller rest in some lines which were entitled "The Wish," beginning with the words—

"From all Decanal cares at last set free,
O could that freedom still more perfect be."

But the most important Episcopal change, in the reign of George II., was when Potter succeeded Archbishop Wake in 1737. The appointment at first looks strange, in connection with the Queen's ecclesiastical influence, for Potter was a High Churchman; but

* "Doddridge Cor.," V. 153.

he was also a man of pre-eminent learning, and a Whig in political opinion. These two recommendations were powerful with her Majesty. She admired the author of "The Antiquities of Greece," and the editor of Plutarch, Basil, and Lycophron; and she liked an argument on points of doctrine with one who had been Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford. In the policy of supporting Walpole and a Whig Ministry—very important in Caroline's estimation—she could count on the adherence of the new Archbishop. So that all things considered, the elevation of Potter quite accorded with her views and her wishes. His influence on the destinies of the Church is another matter. A "cold and dry orthodoxy" has been attributed to him, but with it there has also been ascribed valuable service done to the Church of England by his opposition to all attempts at relaxing the rigour of clerical subscription.* Hoadly was friendly to that object, and might have promoted it had he been made Archbishop; therefore the choosing of Potter in preference is considered by some to have been a security to the Establishment in an hour of peril. But it is curious to find alleged as a reason for this view, that Latitudinarianism was at that time on the increase. It had been increasing *in spite* of subscription. Many could subscribe on some ground, no doubt satisfactory to themselves, however they differed from Church formularies. How that could be a defence which in fact was found to be so much gossamer thread, it is very hard to understand.

Archbishop Potter died in 1747, when the Primacy was offered, first to Sherlock, Bishop of London, and then to Butler, Bishop of Durham. The reason why

* Perry's "History of the Church of England," III. 361.

the former refused it we are not informed ; but the latter is reported to have done so on account of the condition of the Church, of which he took very gloomy views, and did not feel himself competent to meet the exigencies of the case. Herring, Archbishop of York, was the next person thought of for the vacant post, recommended as he was by the loyalty he had manifested during the Rebellion. He accepted it. The ecclesiastical prospect must have appeared to him very different from what it did to his brother, for Herring wrote to a friend saying, "I think it happy that I am called up to this high station at a time when spite and rancour and narrowness of spirit are out of countenance, when we breathe the benign and comfortable air of liberty and toleration, and the teachers of our common religion make it their business to extend its essential influence, and join in supporting its true interest and honour." The tone of sentiment thus expressed, so different from Butler's and from that of many others, is in accordance with the disposition attributed to this Prelate ; but it is supposed, by those who suspect him of latitudinarian opinions, to have proceeded, at least in a measure, from that cause. He occupied the chair of St. Augustine about ten years, and was then followed by Hutton, translated from York in 1757. The new Archbishop, like his predecessor, is described as entertaining "very liberal notions on ecclesiastical affairs ;" but what exhibits his character most decidedly in that respect is, that he was the patron and the friend of Archdeacon Blackburne, a zealous advocate for a relaxation in the terms of conformity. However, his influence after his elevation was very brief, as he died in 1758, and Secker then succeeded him in his duties, prerogatives, and honours. Though Secker had studied

in a Dissenting academy, he manifested, it is said, no such liberal tendencies as some would have anticipated from his early training; on the contrary, he manifested a strictness in admirable contrast, it was thought by some, with the character of certain other Prelates, yet he continued on friendly terms with some Dissenters.* Unfavourable accounts are given of this Primate; he was, according to Gilbert Wakefield, "an imperious and persecuting Prelate." "He preached sermons," says Horace Walpole, "which, what they wanted of Gospel, they made up for in a tone of fanaticism." According to the Jacobite Dr. King, he was "insincere, of moderate parts, and a bad preacher." These are prejudiced witnesses, and Walpole, after all his depreciation of Secker, is obliged to acknowledge his great popularity as a preacher.† If we may judge from a charge he delivered in 1758, he appears to have been an honest man, impressed by the responsibilities of his office. "If," he remarks, "we look upon what we are apt to call our livings only as our livelihoods, and think of little more than living on the income of them according to our own inclinations; if, for want of a good conscience and faith unfeigned, we forfeit the protection of God, and by worldliness, or indolence, or levity in behaviour, talk, or appearance (for gross vices I put out of the question) lose, as we assuredly shall, the reverence of mankind, there will be no foundation left for us to stand upon. Our legal establishment will shake and sink under us. Wicked people will attack us without reserve; the good will be found to condemn and give us up."‡

* See Doddridge's "Correspondence," I. 270.

† "Life of Wakefield," I. 171; Walpole's "Memoir of George II.," 65; King's "Anecdotes," 15.

‡ "Works," V. 444.

CHAPTER II.

THE archæological vein of literature continued to be worked by English clergymen during the second generation of the eighteenth century. The industrious antiquary, Francis Peck, spent a busy life, first as a Northamptonshire Curate, and next as a Leicestershire Rector, in hunting up records, in collecting and translating MSS., and in writing Biographical and Critical Essays, yet not to the neglect of subjects pertaining to the Christian ministry, for he published four theological discourses, which, however, are now utterly forgotten. An equally well-known author of the same class was William Cole, of MSS. celebrity, whose papers, often consulted by students, are preserved in the British Museum, and whose odd-looking portrait in a white surplice is familiar to most old-fashioned book-hunters. First Rector of Hornsey, and next of Bletchley, he employed his time in collecting an enormous mass of historical materials which he never reduced to order ; and it is said by a well-known critic, that, with strong Roman predilections, he combined a gossip's ear and a tatler's pen, and was, on account of the flame and sputter of his strong prejudices, expressively nicknamed Cardinal Cole. Another celebrity was Dr. Samuel Pegge, who lived nearly through the entire century. During the greater part of the thirty years now under

review, he held a Kentish living, where he wrote memoirs for the "*Archæologia*," and after much contention about some preferments in Derbyshire, which he never obtained, we find him inducted Vicar of Heath in the same county. There he followed up his antiquarian pursuits, yet "not entrusting his clerical duties to another until the failure of his eyesight rendered it necessary." Another well-known clerical student of a somewhat similar description, was Dr. Thomas Morell, Rector of Chiswick, Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries, editor of Greek plays and classical lexicons, and a friend of the artist, William Hogarth. Zachary Grey, Rector of Houghton Conquest, and Vicar of St. Peter's and St. Giles, Cambridge, may be added to the list, for a long series of publications issued from his pen, in which, with literary criticism, he united no little zeal in controversy against the Church of Rome and against the Protestant Dissenters. Other writers of a like order might be mentioned; but these suffice as specimens of incumbents who devoted their principal energies to literary rather than pulpit or parochial duties, though in several instances the latter were not neglected.

Other literary Divines of a different class appear in Edward Young and Laurence Sterne. They are generally thought of simply as authors; but they were also country clergymen in the reign of the Second George. At Welwyn, Hertfordshire, Young wrote his "*Night Thoughts*," after he lost his wife, Lady Betty Lee, and then both his step-daughter and her husband. We are not surprised to hear he spent some hours every day in his churchyard; but it is strange to find it also stated, that he was fond of amusements, that he established a bowling green and an assembly in his

parish, and that he felt uneasy because he could not obtain further preferment. He applied to Secker on the subject, who significantly reminded him that fortune and reputation raised him above the need of advancement, and the sentiments he had expressed above any great concern respecting anything of that kind. At Sutton in the Forest of Galtrees, Yorkshire—holding at the same time another living—Sterne, as Prebendary of York, occupied a good position in the Church. In his rectory house he wrote "*Tristram Shandy*," and in the pulpit preached discourses quite as sentimental as his famous "*Journey*." His literary renown is deservedly great, but he made no addition to the moral and spiritual influence of the Church of England. The kindest tribute which can be paid to his personal memory, is to repeat over his grave his own words, "Alas, poor Yorick!" Thomas Broughton, Reader at the Temple, Vicar of Bedminster, Bristol, author of several literary works; Conyers Middleton, the antagonist of Bentley, and the author of "*The Free Inquiry concerning the Miraculous Powers of the Early Church*;" and Arthur Sykes, Vicar of Godmersham, Kent, an auxiliary of Hoadly's, and the writer of a book on "*The Innocency of Error*," were also men of repute in their day and generation. Another name may be mentioned, George England, Rector of Woollerton and Vicar of Hanworth, Norfolk, who composed an eccentric book, entitled "*An Inquiry into the Morals of the Ancients*" (1735), in which he endeavours to show how Greeks and Romans rose above their system of religion, though he has to make some fatal admissions; with all this he couples illustrations of the gross inconsistency of modern Christians, and if his report of contemporary opinion be only in a

measure true, it throws a melancholy light upon the character of the times. "Religion is thought and spoken of," he says, "as a device to deceive and subdue the minds of the vulgar, and as too gross an imposition to captivate the opinion or belief of those of a higher rank ; the clergy are looked upon as a pack of crafty knaves, who have no other purport nor design in talking of piety, religion, and goodness, or in being careful of anything which concerns the Church and their order, than to procure power, wealth, and possessions to themselves." *

Douglas, afterwards Bishop of Carlisle, won for himself considerable literary reputation by an Essay, defending Milton from the charge of plagiarism ; and, in a line with his clerical office and work, he entered the lists with David Hume in a book entitled "Criterion ; or, Miracles Examined" (1754). The ground of attack on Christianity had changed since the days of Toland, Shaftesbury, Collins, Woolston, and Tindal. Hume, in his "Essay on Miracles," approached nearer to the modern standpoint of sceptical warfare. He argues against miracles as contrary to all experience ; as utterly unsupportable by historical evidence ; and as in themselves, if not absolutely impossible, yet very unlikely to be wrought by the Divine Being. He puts various stories of miracles together, with the view of rendering all of them incredible. The object of Douglas is stated on his title-page, "The Criterion ; or, Miracles Examined, with a View to Expose the Pretensions of Pagans and Papists, to Compare the Miraculous Powers recorded in the New Testament with those said to subsist in Latter Times ; and to Show the Great and Material Difference between them

* "Inquiry," 284.

in point of Evidence, from whence it will Appear that the Former must be True and the Latter may be False." The author occupies historical ground throughout, insisting on the difference between true and false marvels ; and leaving the philosophical argument of natural impossibility which Hume had but slightly touched, to be handled by other advocates. Hume met with a more formidable antagonist in the Scotch theologian, Dr. Campbell, and the English philosopher, Dr. Price. They united in exploding the fallacy that experience is opposed to testimony in support of miracles, and that no testimony can overcome what is assumed to be universal experience.

But other names of greater eminence wait for consideration. If the reign of Queen Anne claims to be the Augustan age of English literature in general, the reign of George II. was an Augustan age of theological literature in particular. I do not now speak of theological force, evangelical fervour, and that light and love which rise far above intellectual and artistic influences, but of mental ability, the accumulation and distribution of learning, the cultivation of taste in Scripture criticism, and the employment of logical argument in the service of Christianity. Waterland, Archdeacon of Middlesex in 1730, acutely defended orthodox views of the Holy Trinity, and his work forms a store-house of thought for students of that subject ; and Jortin, a preacher in several places about London, before he obtained the Vicarage of Kensington in 1762, was a sagacious historical critic in matters connected with Church history, and a writer of sermons, masculine in thought and vigorous in style, though sadly wanting in unction. Newton, incumbent of St. Mary's-le-Bow, though not occupying any high place in the republic of

letters, is known by one class of readers as a learned writer on prophecy, and by another class as an annotator on Milton. Lowth, professor of poetry at Oxford in 1743, delivered prelections which, if for deep learning, and robust treatment they are surpassed by works of an earlier date, they certainly eclipse them in refinement of taste, purity of feeling, and elegance of diction.

But two names rise far above others. William Warburton, born in 1698, and early placed in a lawyer's office, was a self-made man. The beginning of his rise in the Church occurred when Queen Caroline asked Bishop Hare if he could name some learned man, fit to read and talk with her. Hare mentioned Warburton, but her Majesty's sudden illness and speedy death prevented the Royal intention of promoting him from being then carried into effect. With some defects, for want of better training in earlier days, he certainly mastered a vast amount of varied learning; and whatever we may think of his argument in "The Divine Legation of Moses," we are compelled to admire the vastness of his resources, and the skill, adroitness, and effect with which he employs them. In spite of his love of paradox, everybody is constrained to acknowledge his industry and power. "To the composition of this prodigious performance," says a writer in the *Quarterly Review*, "Hooker and Stillingfleet could have contributed the erudition, Chillingworth and Locke the acuteness, Taylor an imagination even more wild and copious, Swift, and perhaps Echard, the sarcastic vein of wit; but what powers of understanding except that of Warburton could first have amassed all these materials and then compacted them into a bulky and elaborate work, so consistent and harmonious?" This

eulogium will be deemed excessive, but with some abatement, it brilliantly exhibits the merit of a work which must ever rank high in theological literature. Few persons read the "Divine Legation" nowadays, and little, if anything, can be gathered from it in the way of enlightenment and satisfaction, but as a literary exercise, as an intellectual tonic, it is worth a patient perusal by theological students.

The "Alliance" was written before the "Divine Legation," and though unequal to that work in learning, the two books resemble each other in eloquence and ingenuity. Warburton places the establishment upon a different footing from that chosen by Hooker, and nobody, however Erastian, would seriously adopt the line of argument pursued in the "Alliance;" but whatever may be thought of the author's reasonings, the originality of the Essay must strike every one who reads it. Warburton's sermons have much of that vigour exhibited in his other works, but we miss in the former what we do not expect in the latter, spirituality and unction. Preacher of Lincoln's Inn, 1746, Dean of Bristol in 1757, he was made Bishop of Bristol in 1759. At a time when pre-eminent devotedness to the clerical calling, and a zealous discharge of its most spiritual duties, was, to say the least, not regarded as a chief qualification for the episcopate, such a scholar and thinker as the author now described, might well be considered to have claims above most men to such a distinction. But a critic like Salmasius, "who seems to have erected his throne on a heap of stones, that he might have them at hand to throw at the heads of all that passed by;" a man voracious of praise, and expecting compliments to be returned with interest; a rector who never visited his parish, and a

dignitary charged with neglecting his office, could not be expected to win the hearts, or edify the lives of either clergy or laymen. Nor did Warburton make any mark in the House of Lords. Some dreaded his promotion as that of a second Atterbury; but, says Hurd, his admiring biographer, he had neither talents nor inclination for parliamentary intrigue or parliamentary eloquence. In a triennial charge for 1761, he throws an odd light on Episcopal practices, for he observes that it was a habit in old times for a new Bishop to give some intimation, how he was lifted into so eminent but hazardous a station; now the clergy had become less solicitous to know "whence their Bishop had dropped among them." After warning his auditors against "fanaticism, whether spiritual or literary; bigotry, whether religious or civil; and infidelity, whether philosophical or immoral," he urged them to diligence in study, especially in theological learning; and after an allusion to the universities not at all complimentary—it should be recollected he had not been at Oxford or Cambridge—he poured out his satire on all popular religious writings of the day, comparing the smaller Divines to the flies and lice of Egypt from the dust of the land. It "meets you in your desk, and lies hid in all you taste and handle. The artful disguise, too, is no less taking than the plenty. And as Flaminius, host of Chalcis, entertained his guest with a magnificent variety of viands, and all from the hogsty, so the whole of this delicious cookery comes from as dirty a place—I mean a bookseller's garret." Warburton had a profound contempt for Methodists, pronouncing Whitefield a madman, and Wesley little better; but he cultivated a real friendship with Doddridge, and wrote to him pleasant and complimentary

letters. The turbulent controversialist, under the spell of the Nonconformist's amiable and genial spirit, reminds us of the Lion and Una in Spenser's "Faerie Queene." It may be added, that when Warburton died, in 1779, periodicals of the day, with two exceptions, were silent respecting the man who all his life had been tormented by literary ambition. Since his death his fame has increased, and he has been pronounced "the last of our reasoning scholars, the last of our powerful polemics, and the last of a breed which we take as extinct." *

A far nobler name, all things considered, belongs to the middle of the last century. Joseph Butler, born in 1692, was of a Dissenting family, and received his early education in the academy of Samuel Jones at Gloucester, whence, at his own request, he removed to the University of Oxford.

The earliest preferment bestowed on Butler was the preachership of the Rolls Chapel, where, at the early age of twenty-six, he began to deliver his masterly sermons, fifteen of which were published, and laid the first foundations of his literary fame. Four years afterwards, he became Rector of Stanhope, where, from lingering parish traditions, we learn that he lived a retired life, and was greatly respected and beloved by his parishioners. The scantiest notices of such a man are gathered up with diligence, and we are told that he had a black pony which he used to ride very fast, and that finding it difficult to resist the importunity of beggars, they would follow the Rector "so earnestly as sometimes to drive him back into his house as his only escape." In connection with this story, it is curious to read in a sermon of his the following

* *Edinburgh Review*, XIII. 343-345.

passage: "Others make a custom of giving to idle vagabonds; a kind of charity very improperly so called, which one really wonders people can allow themselves in, merely to be relieved from importunity, or, at best, to gratify a false good nature." Secker, in conversation with Queen Caroline, who delighted in Butler's philosophical discourses, mentioned his name to her Majesty, who said she thought he was dead. "No, Madam, but he is buried," was the reply. This led to his being made Clerk of the Closet and a frequenter of the Queen's drawing-room, followed by a recommendation that the King should give him some vacant Bishopric. Accordingly, after her death, Butler became Bishop of Bristol. That See was not worth more than £400 a year; and upon accepting it, he remarked, in reply to the offer by Sir Robert Walpole, "It is not very suitable, either to the condition of my fortune or the circumstances of my preferment; nor, as I should have thought, answerable to the recommendation with which I was honoured." With the Bishopric, however, Butler retained his Rectory; and a year after his elevation to the bench, he was appointed Dean of St. Paul's. Then he resigned the Stanhope living, and devoted himself entirely to his episcopal charge, and to his duties at London. He contributed to the improvement of the palace at Bristol much more money than he ever received from his income there; and traditions exist of the sum having reached the amount of four or five thousand pounds. His habits seem to have been somewhat peculiar. He would walk for hours in the darkest night, and then suddenly pause, and ask a companion some question which indicated his deep thoughtfulness—once inquiring what security there was against in-

sanity in the case of communities any more than of individuals. In 1750 he was elevated to Durham, when he resisted an attempt to deprive the See of a portion of temporal splendour, by detaching from it the Lieutenancy of the County ; and after he had taken up his residence in the north, princely hospitality made Butler popular with all classes. He delivered a Charge, which was grossly misrepresented by an anonymous controversialist, afterwards found to be Archdeacon Blackburne. The tone of the Charge, on the whole, may be pronounced judicious. Perhaps, at that time, when there was little or no enthusiasm within the pale of the Establishment, the Bishop's warnings against anything of that kind were quite superfluous, but the most weighty arguments in the pulpit against prevailing scepticism were requisite, and the use of these Butler earnestly enforced. One point in the Charge, which gave rise to misinterpretation, was the prominence given to "external religion," such as the renovation of Churches, no doubt required at the time, and the more frequent holding of public services, a measure still more advisable. But the illustration and enforcement of loftier piety are wanting, though there are found exhortations to pastoral visits by clergymen, and family prayer in the houses of parishioners. No ground whatever exists in it for the charge, that Butler cherished Roman Catholic tendencies ; and the story of his manifesting anything of that sort in his last hours, is an abominable fabrication. We can picture him in his later days at Durham as he is represented, of reverent aspect, his face thin and pale, a divine placidness in his countenance, inspiring veneration, his white hair hanging gracefully over his shoulders, his whole figure patriarchal ; but

portraits of an earlier date exhibit him in the Episcopal wig of those days.

His "Analogy" is a work of such unrivalled fame as to redeem the eighteenth century from some of the depreciatory reflections thoughtlessly brought against it. Butler spent twenty years in weighing anti-Christian objections, which were circulated in all companies from the Queen's drawing-room down to the City coffee-house; and answers to these objections, perhaps originally presented in a conversational form within the Royal circle, constitute the staple of his wonderful volume. The drift of the work is eloquently expressed by Southey in an inscription on Butler's monument at Bristol: "Others had established the historical and prophetic grounds of the Christian religion, and that sure testimony of its truth, which is found in its perfect adaptation to the heart of man. It was reserved for him to develop its analogy to the constitution and course of nature; and laying his strong foundations in the depth of that great argument, there to construct another and irrefragable proof; thus rendering philosophy subservient to faith, and finding in outward and visible things the type and evidence of those within the veil." These stirring words, open to exception in the estimation of some, will be cordially accepted by others. The pantheist and the positivist, who can see nothing in the universe but physical law and impersonal force, and are unconquerably prejudiced against the idea of anything supernatural, may evade the application of Butler's argument. But those who believe in a Divine Being, and are sorely tried by honest doubts, have found precious help in the considerations suggested by the profound analogist. Whether or not many people have been reclaimed by him from infi-

delity, it must be allowed that multitudes have been strengthened in their faith by his forcible reasonings ; and it is wonderful how men of different schools, the Orthodox, the Evangelical, and the Latitudinarian, looking at nature and Scripture, each from his own point of view, have expressed their obligations to Butler, and have vied with each other in praising his treatise. It has become the fashion in some quarters to depreciate the value of Butler's reasoning, by saying that to meet difficulties in one direction by pointing to difficulties in another direction is a poor way of solving them. But no one who reads Butler with attention and candour can fail to see that the *solution* of difficulties connected with Christianity is not his object. He aims at showing how difficulties with respect to Revelation constitute no valid ground for rejecting it, any more than difficulties with respect to nature can justify a disbelief of its order and origin. We must be guided by probabilities, and the probabilities in favour of the Gospel outweigh immensely any amount of objection arising from difficulties urged against it. His purpose is not absolutely to prove the truth of religion against infidels and sceptics, but to make it very clear that there is no effectual bar in the way of belief arising from counter probabilities. It is a great pity that some who criticise Butler, do not take the trouble to read the preface to his "Analogy," where he explains the object contemplated in writing the book. It is remarkable that in one of the pregnant passages in which the work abounds, he anticipates what recent discoveries have set before us in a conspicuous light. "We are placed in the middle of a scheme, not a fixed, but a progressive one, every way incomprehensible — incomprehensible in a manner

equally with respect to what has been, what now is, and what shall be hereafter." And with equal thoughtfulness he makes a remark applicable to many of our difficulties, "Things which we call irregular may not be so at all,"—and "some unknown relation or some unknown impossibility may render what is objected against just and good, nay, good in the highest practical degree." The fulness of Butler's mind is amazing, and it is perfectly true, that readers of the "Analogy," however fresh and original may be thoughts which rise in their minds, feel obliged to acknowledge that the author, as Bartlett his biographer remarks, "has been beforehand with them in all." And it is further well worth noticing that the Bishop recognizes distinctly a fact in human nature, which renders a revelation of redeeming mercy indispensable. He speaks in few words of "those who have corrupted their nature, are fallen from their original rectitude, and whose passions are become excessive by repeated violations of their inward constitution,"—and he lays down the principle, "Upright creatures may want to be improved, depraved creatures want to be renewed." The manner in which he dwells on the particular system of Christianity, and the appointment of a Mediator, and the redemption of the world by Him, shows that he kept in view the grand provision which the gospel makes for the forgiveness of sins, and for the restoration of human nature to the image of God. The main lines of Evangelical theology are really laid down by this great reasoner.

His "Sermons on Human Nature" are also of the highest value; they proceed in the same path of reflection, and form a text-book on morals, which, putting aside schemes framed on the fitness of things

and the expediency of virtue, builds a sound ethical system on a study of human nature, according to its original constitution, as discoverable through consciousness and observation. Probably, after all that has been written and said on the subject since, these sermons go as far as is possible for human thought under the guidance of enlightened reason. But with the great admiration which Butler's works inspire in most minds, not a few are constrained to confess that his arguments are "wrought out in frost, not in fire." An impassioned style would certainly not befit the kind of reasoning in which Butler was engaged, but more warmth might have been thrown into the colour of the work, imparting to it a glow, which would heighten the impressiveness of the author's logic. Works on evidence written in those days have been criticised as making too much of appeals to reason in support of Christianity ; but the fault does not lie in that quarter, so much as in the chilliness of the atmosphere breathed throughout the discussions, and the want of a fuller exhibition of those Evangelical truths, which are the glory of the sacred volume, and which touch with loving power the hearts of men.

This brief notice of an illustrious group shows how the sphere of Christian thought in the highest circles had, with few exceptions, narrowed down to the treatment of "evidences;" how the Evangelical cast of thought, conspicuous amongst the Puritans, had disappeared in the writings of great thinkers ; how even the Trinitarian controversy, rife in the former generation, had spent its force, at least in the Establishment ; and how predominant had become the habit of appealing to Reason in support of Revelation. The proof of Christianity which Southey describes—"that sure

testimony to its truth which is found in its perfect adaptation *to the heart of man*," its character as a redemptive remedy for all the ills of our fallen nature—was passed over with little notice. So that, whilst gratefully acknowledging, not only the intellectual power and literary excellence of the writers mentioned, but also the service they rendered to the cause of religion, one cannot assign the highest place to their spiritual influence on the minds and the consciences of their fellow-men.

Amongst the pastors and preachers of the period, there are a few who require separate notice. Rarely has a man been found in the Church more earnest and devout, more pure in motive, more disinterested in aim, than Thomas Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man, who died in 1755. With a limited field of operation, he strove to cultivate every part of it; but failed, to a large extent, through the application of High Church discipline to people who had no spiritual sympathy with him whatever. Influenced by the best intentions, he endeavoured to extinguish immorality through the ecclesiastical punishment of offenders, and, as the result, he created prejudices and aroused opposition, after the manner of the Presbyterians of the English Commonwealth. Unlike as his theory was to theirs, it produced similar effects. John Clayton and James Hervey were also clergymen of eminent character and of exemplary self-consecration. They had been students together in Oxford at the commencement of the period, but after leaving the University, pursued different paths of teaching and worship. The former was an incumbent at Manchester during the Rebellion of 1745, and manifested unmistakably strong Jacobite convictions. Like Wilson, he had faith in the power

of penal coercion to cure vice and crime, and like him he held High Church views of sacraments and of service ; but, withal, he manifested something of the Methodist fervour which he had caught in his student days, and could preach sermons so as to win the approval of hearers imbued with "Evangelical" sentiments. His fellow-student was different from him in all but his spiritual ardour. A Low Churchman, a thorough Calvinist, Hervey preached, as to the substance of his discourses, in the manner of the Puritans. With no depth of theological thought, he was florid in the extreme ; nevertheless there rested an unction on his ministry which attracted crowds to the village church of Weston Favell, where, to the day of his death, in 1758, he excited the affections of his hearers, by pointing them to Christ as the Saviour of the world. To the last he continued to preach with acceptance and success ; and it is reported of him, by local tradition, that, enfeebled by consumption, he persevered in his employment, lifting up hands so wasted by disease that sunlight from the church windows shone through the attenuated palms. The room in which Hervey breathed his last, not far from the church, is still reverently shown by the occupants of the house. Samuel Walker, of Truro, well known for Evangelical opinions, an awakening ministry, and great ministerial success ; also Thomas Adams, Rector of Wintringham, the author of a popular work entitled "Private Thoughts," stamped with the same character as distinguished Walker's preaching, belonged to the second generation of the eighteenth century. Also, in Cornwall, before Wesley commenced his work, we find George Thomson, like Walker an Oxford student, inducted into the small living of St. Gennys—where still

the parish church "crouches, as of old, together with a few wind-shorn trees, behind a little hillock, as if to save itself from being swept away in the fearful blasts that rush up from the tumbling seas, and go roaring across the moorlands beyond." Converted by a wonderful dream, he told his little flock of the change he had undergone, and the Evangelical earnestness which followed it startled not the parish only but the whole neighbourhood. Thomson wrote to Watts, begging his prayers, and to Doddridge he sent an account of the dream and its effects.* The fire kindled in that out-of-the-way Cornish village spread around, and touched the heart of another clergyman, John Bennett, over seventy years of age. One afternoon, after Thomson had preached at Fremington, a young man, the Vicar's son, rose in his pew, and with choking voice, declared that the sermon he had just heard brought to him the knowledge of salvation. Whitefield and the Wesleys visited St. Gennys, and fanned the flame; and, strange to say, under the preaching of the latter, there appeared such an excitement that one after another in the church stood up and declared how many years they had been in bondage to Satan; Thomson crying at last, "And I for above seventy." A religious revival began in Cornwall before even Methodism reached that part of England, and this fact is worthy of particular notice in reference to a period often supposed to be one of *universal* and unbroken spiritual slumber.

* Mr. Thomson is said to be the clergyman referred to in Doddridge's "Life of Colonel Gardiner," as "one of the brightest living ornaments of the Established Church." Doddridge himself is cited as an authority for this.—See an interesting paper in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, for January, 1881, entitled "The First Cornish Methodist," by the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse.

Other clergymen, less pronounced, perhaps, in their opinions than those I have mentioned, "were endued with a restless activity, and preached in various churches and private rooms, in the Metropolis, in Bristol, and in other places, without identifying themselves with the great Nonconformist denominations," hereafter to be described, "and without indicating any sympathy with the old Dissent." * Moreover, we read of parish ministers thoroughly devoted to their work, such as Hildesly, Vicar of Hitchin, afterwards Rector of Holwell, and finally Bishop of Sodor and Man, on Wilson's death, in 1755, who, when his income did not admit of keeping a curate, threw his whole soul into pastoral work ; and Law, who holding a Cumberland living, and on the way to a Bishopric, combined with clerical diligence a warm attachment to the cause of civil and ecclesiastical liberty. A numerous class, especially in the rural districts, consisted of those who, with genial good nature and benevolent affections, united coarseness of manners. They perhaps caught the tone of some neighbouring country squires, such as are familiar to us through sketches of character and life drawn at that period. Their generosity, friendliness, and bravery were regarded by themselves and others as making atonement for what they deemed superficial infirmities incident to human nature. Far from being unpopular, their benevolence won the affections of their rustic flocks, and their simplicity the admiration of polite society. They hated Rome, and they hated Geneva ; the latter perhaps more than the first. Papists, in their estimation, were idolaters ; and Puritans were hypocrites. Certain doctrines taught in common by the Reformers and later Divines in the

* Watson's "Life of Wesley," 72.

English Church, were caricatured and denounced, especially the doctrine of Justification by Faith, which was represented as a doctrine *against* good works. Miracles were appealed to as the seals of Christianity in the first century ; but the work of the Holy Spirit on the souls of men in the eighteenth, was pronounced an idle dream.

Two volumes of Discourses, some preached in St. Paul's and some at Oxford, by Jeremiah Seed, attained great popularity in 1751, and passed through four editions. They are specimens of such pulpit addresses as were at that period most approved. Fluent in language, stiff and artificial in manner, sometimes agreeable in illustration, always clear, intelligible, and neatly arranged, they treat of such duties as the Love of Enemies, Domestic Affection, Unreserved Obedience, the Government of the Thoughts, Moderation in Amusements, Prayer, Resignation, and the Love of God ; these points are enforced chiefly on the ground of the reasonableness on which they rest, and the advantages which they secure. To a sense of propriety, to the perception of utility in the minds of the congregation, well-written sermons of this order were addressed ; but of the higher motives presented in the gospel, little is said. Reason is described as that Sun, which God has lighted up to dispel the mists and fogs of vice. "Virtue must be built upon interest, (*i.e.*) our interest upon the whole." *

A curious glimpse of a provincial church and its local customs, is afforded in the history of Yarmouth. Every Sunday morning it was customary for the Mayor to receive the members of the Corporation in the Town Hall ; and then, wearing his robe and chain,

* "Seed's Sermons," I. 193, 411.

and preceded by the insignia of his office, he went in procession to St. Nicholas' Church, where special seats were provided, that for the Mayor, at the south-east corner of the south aisle, being on a level with the pulpit. At the conclusion of the service, the officiating minister turned and bowed to his worship, who, having bowed in return, left as he had entered, only not stopping at the Guildhall, but going home to his own residence, where on "scarlet days," those who accompanied him were entertained with what is called a "whet." * In country villages, where no exemplary ministers were found, where the rector or curate lived a free and easy life, and liked to drink "a dish of tea with the landlady, and afterwards a bowl of punch with the landlord of the inn," not much attention would be paid either to spiritual necessities or to the decencies of religious service. Buildings were neglected, chancel and nave fell into decay, the Communion table presented a shabby appearance; surplices were dirty; the singing was miserable; the preaching no better; and, from beginning to end, everything presented a slovenly aspect.

The moral character of some of the clergy was no better than their material surroundings. Instances of profligacy are on record. Drunkenness was not unknown, even in the House of God; and shameful immoralities of other kinds were, on sufficient grounds, attributed to clerical incumbents. I do not care to give examples. The number of such cases cannot be ascertained, and therefore no just conclusion can be reached as to the proportion which they bore to those of a different description. No doubt exaggeration is common with reference to subjects of this kind. Dis-

* "The Perlustration of Great Yarmouth," I. 75.

graceful anecdotes may suggest sweeping generalizations, unjust to the age with which they are associated. But, however judgment may lean on the side of charity, enough is undeniable to produce a disagreeable impression relative to a number of persons in holy orders, during the second generation embraced in this history. One scandal in particular ought to be noticed. The marriage law was in a miserable state, and weddings were celebrated in wretched places, under wretched circumstances. Hand-bills were circulated, announcing that at the old Red Hand and Mitre, three doors from Fleet Lane, and next door to the White Swan, marriages could be performed. Wedding rites, with a licence certificate and a crown stamp, "at the new Chapel next door to the china shop, near Fleet Bridge," were offered at the price of one guinea. Scenes ensued such as beggar description. Deceptions were practised, and immoralities encouraged. Coaches drove up, containing fashionably dressed women, who were met by men in clerical costume, offering to tie the nuptial bond. Some of these worthless creatures, it may be presumed, were only in *pretended* holy orders, taking the words in the worst sense; but it is perfectly certain, that others had been regularly ordained, and one who reached more than common infamy, was excommunicated in 1742, and died in the Fleet prison in 1758. High-minded men mourned over this state of things, and condemned the clergy who officiated on such occasions; but it is melancholy to know, that some from whom better things might have been expected, connived at these practices, and that not a few rather laughed at the ludicrousness of the circumstances, than frowned on the iniquity of the crime.

As to faith in Divine revelation, who can doubt the

truth of Bishop Butler's oft-cited words ? * “ It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject for inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world.” And statements as to abounding immorality are painfully supported by the plays, novels, biographies, and anecdotes of the age.

Hence it appears that the National Church, with all its resources, had failed to purify the atmosphere of the country. Some may have asked for more than could fairly be expected at its hands. But no one, however moderate his expectations of ecclesiastical efficiency, can maintain that the Church, after so long an existence, had fairly fulfilled its office. The Church could number not a few amongst clergy and laity who served their generation according to the will of God, but a much larger mass remained in a state of moral degradation or spiritual insensibility. Public opinion then was not such as public opinion has since become ; that which would now be scouted as intolerable was treated then with levity or indifference. Much of the literature of the day, even when on the side of what is right, described vice, or alluded to it, after a manner which betrayed a distressing want of moral feeling. Of course, it is not meant that the Church was responsible for all the literature produced ; but the Church, as the spiritual instructor of the nation, must

* Advertisement to the first edition of the “ *Analogy*,” 1736.

be held responsible, to a certain extent, for the moral atmosphere in the midst of which it lived and moved. The status occupied by the Establishment has been supported on the ground of the strength which it gives to its ministers, and the means of usefulness which it can put in motion. Accordingly, when we apply that principle to its history, a century or more ago, we inquire after the effects produced by it on the spiritual and moral condition of the people. Looking at the subject, not from a sectarian point of view, but as it may be fairly regarded by Churchmen, I cannot help reaching an unfavourable conclusion. One who believed firmly in the principle of an Establishment, and admired the parochial system spread over the country, might in the last century have used the words uttered by an illustrious Scotch Divine on his visiting the University of Oxford some forty years ago : " You have the best machinery in the world, and you know not how to use it."* With an admission of the ability and learning exhibited by some, and of the zeal and activity exhibited by others, also with an admission of the pointed reproofs administered by a few, no one can say of the clergy *in general* that they really met and fought against what was bad in their day and generation. It is painful to turn over the biographies of leading Churchmen, and to find that they neglected their spiritual duties, while their letters, their conversation, and their conduct exhibit, as a leading passion, the love of preferment, the watching for a stall, the hope of a Deanery, or the desire of a Diocese. Turning from books written by such men, to some others, noticed hereafter, is certainly to exchange worlds ; it is to pass from a cold dry atmosphere, as on a moon-

* Dr. Chalmers, see Stanley's " Church of Scotland," 153.

light night, to one filled with warmth and life as on a summer's noon. Some will say that enthusiasm in the latter case filled the air—that the spirit abroad became fanatical. Let this for a moment be allowed, still there arose a zeal, a self-devotedness, an all-absorbing consecration, which had in it, so far, a divinity sufficient to redeem it from disgrace. Can it be believed that if the Church had been alive to its great mission, and thrown into it the force and fire which we shall hereafter have to witness, that the state of English society would have been what it was in 1760?

Nor should the deficiencies of Nonconformity be overlooked. The state of religion amongst the Dissenting bodies will be examined hereafter, but in the meantime, it must be admitted that, with certain exceptions to be pointed out, a spirit of indifference respecting the masses of the people infected the respectable congregations gathered within the walls of Protestant meeting-houses. Yet, bad as things were in England, they were not so bad as they might have been. It is only necessary to look across the Channel to see this. The state of France was much worse than the state of England. Religion under Queen Anne and the Georges will bear comparison with religion under Louis XIV. and his successors. The English Revolution of 1688 had saved this country from the miseries entailed by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. The best Protestant blood had been drained off the French coasts, but Protestant blood, purified in many ways, flowed freely through the veins of the body social and political on this side the Straits of Dover. Religious liberty, to an extent which appeared enviable in the eyes of the descendants of the

Huguenots, existed here. The superstitions of Romanism, in spite of Gallican liberties, domineered over the lives and habits of most Frenchmen religiously disposed. But Romanism in Great Britain was held in check during the last century, though by means which we are constrained to disapprove. Infidelity was, after all, not rampant amongst our fathers as amongst their foreign contemporaries. Deistical writers, patted on the back by literary votaries, were never popular; Atheism was intolerable to the multitude, whatever might be the prejudice against existing religion; a God-defying spirit, of the French type, had not laid hold on the lower orders; some reverence for Divine things happily lingered, upon which Methodism successfully laid hold; and whatever instances of immorality might exist in the Church, the luxury, dissipation, and vice of the upper class of the French Clergy found no counterpart in the lives of English dignitaries in general.

The annals of the University of Cambridge, from 1730 to 1760, are very uninteresting, and shed no light on the religious history of the times. But an important movement at Oxford coming within the limits of this chapter, is inseparably connected with the ecclesiastical history of England. Cambridge in the seventeenth century played a leading part in the Puritan struggle then going on. It perpetuated and revived a tone of "Evangelical" thought and feeling which had been received from earlier times. Afterwards it proved the nursery for a different form of teaching, philosophical and "latitudinarian," which gained and kept a steady grasp on the minds of cultivated Divines through a long portion of the next century. In that century, Oxford took the lead in the guidance of religious

thoughtfulness, and did so in quite a new and original way. Oxford under Owen had done much to promote Puritan divinity in England ; after the Restoration it lapsed into a state of theological inactivity, amidst which came occasional outbreaks of intolerance and despotism on the one hand, and the assertion of liberty and independence on the other : the removal from the Christ Church list of Locke, and the resistance of Hough, President of Magdalen, can never be forgotten. Yet a wonderful revival of religious feeling awaited, not the University at large, but a few young men in two or three Colleges, about the year 1727. This revival originated not with the authorities, not with any members distinguished at the time, but with certain students, obscure and unknown, but destined to win a world-wide fame. It is interesting to trace the gradual progress of the new impulse. A Lincoln man, John Wesley, who was to take the lead in much that followed, wrote to his brother in 1726, "As far as I have ever observed, I never knew a College besides ours, whereof the members were so perfectly satisfied with one another, and so inoffensive to the other part of the University. All I have yet seen of the fellows are both well natured and well bred, men admirably disposed, as well to preserve peace and good neighbourhood among themselves, as to promote it wherever else they have any acquaintance." Speaking of the same year, the same writer remarks, "I saw no reason to think the greater part of these truly loved or feared God. Such acquaintance therefore I did not choose. . . . When they came a few times and found I still declined returning the visit, I saw them no more. . . . I knew many reflections would follow, but that did not move me, as I knew full well it was my calling to go through

evil report and good report.”* A select company was formed, knit together by close ties of religious sympathy. They were in derision called “Sacramentarians,” “Bible Bigots,” “Bible Moths,” “The Godly Club.” The father of him who was the leading spirit in this unique party wrote in a letter, saying, “I hear my son John has the honour of being styled the Father of ‘the Holy Club :’ if it be so, I am sure I must be the grandfather of it, and I need not say that I had rather any of my sons should be so dignified and distinguished than to have the title of His Holiness.” † A young man named Morgan, who joined this band, addicted himself to fasting and privation ; and this, working upon a delicate constitution, probably hastened his death, which of course served to increase the disrepute of the society. Another student, George Whitefield, who came to Oxford at the time, hearing of the young men who “lived by rule and method,” was drawn toward them, and defended them from the revilings of opponents : ‡ “And when he saw them go through a ridiculing crowd to receive the Sacrament at St. Mary’s, he was strongly inclined to follow their example.” “They were now about fifteen in number. When first they began to meet, they read divinity on Sunday evenings only, and pursued their classical studies on other nights : but religion soon became the sole business of their meetings ; they now regularly visited the prisoners and the sick, communicated once a week, and fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays, the stationary days of the ancient Church, which were thus set apart because on those days our Saviour had been betrayed and crucified. They also drew up a scheme of self-

* Southey’s “Wesley,” I. 24, 26.

† Ibid., 30.

‡ Ibid., 33, 34.

examination, to assist themselves by means of prayer and meditation in attaining simplicity and the love of God." Religious conferences were novelties at Oxford ; but they strongly resembled the associations for instruction and prayer held in London under the auspices of Dr. Horneck and others. The Bishop of Oxford sanctioned the visitation of the prisoners ; but the seniors of Christ Church considered it an outbreak of fanaticism, and consulted as to the method of checking it. It was reported that the Dean and the Censors were going to blow up the Godly Club. Various causes, especially the odium of singularity, and the consequence of over-fasting, gradually thinned the fellowship, and by 1734 the numbers dwindled from seven-and-twenty down to five.

They were all High Churchmen, and had no sympathy with Nonconformists ; apostolical succession they believed to be essential to the Christian ministry, and they held that none had authority to administer sacraments except men episcopally ordained. In the meetings of the Oxford association we undoubtedly discover the *cradle of Methodism* ; but there were members who had little or no sympathy with forms of doctrine, effort, and organization which grew out of this rudimentary origin. Clayton became a Jacobite. Benjamin Ingham, another of the band, joined the Moravians ; so did John Gambold. Thomas Broughton, another of the number, we find acting for years as Secretary to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Charles Kinchen, also a member, maintained the position of an Established clergyman at Dummer, where he was indefatigable in his parish, and admitted John Wesley to his pulpit ; James Hervey, remained entirely unconnected with Wesleyan Methodism, as it respects both doctrinal and ecclesiastical principles.

Before concluding the history of English Episcopalianism down to the end of George II.'s reign, it is necessary that I should go back a few years, and complete my notices of Nonjuring clergymen.

Union with the Eastern Church is a favourite project with some High Churchmen, who, disgusted with Rome, yet crave for Episcopal union. The Nonjurors took that subject up in the year 1716, and the correspondence, with details of a proposed Concordat, has been preserved among Bishop Jolly's MSS. The particulars are too complicated for these pages. The scheme ended, as all such schemes do, in the exchange of documents, and the expression of mutual regard, whilst "the correspondence furnishes evidence of the straitened circumstances of the Nonjurors, as well as of the suspicion and severity of the Government. They had not the means even of showing ordinary hospitality to the foreigners with whom they were in communication."* Soon after these efforts to unite with Orientals, the Nonjurors divided among themselves. As is natural in such circumstances, individual opinion came in conflict with theoretical unity; and in 1718 appeared the spectacle of a division in the camp, under two leaders, Collier on the one side, Spinkes on the other. Both opposed the National Church; but Collier added to his rejection of the national oath the disuse of loyal prayers, that is to say, prayers for the reigning dynasty, and the maintenance of certain forms and ceremonies, denominated in the controversy by the word *usages*; whilst Spinkes adhered simply to the original basis of the separation, *i.e.*, the refusal of certain oaths and prayers. The "usages" related to the mixing of water with wine in

* Lathbury's, "History of the Nonjurors," 361.

the Lord's Supper ; the commemoration of the faithful dead ; a prayer of invocation ; a form of oblation in the Eucharist ; immersion in baptism ; and the use of anointing oil. These matters led to sore contention, and for a time there was a decided split amongst the Nonjurors. But Collier died in 1726, and Spinkes followed him in 1727 ; and the division, fostered by the advocacy of these partisans, ended when both had expired. The brightest lights were extinguished about 1730. Dr. Jenkin, chaplain to Bishop Lake, died a little before that time. Henry Gandy, who caught Spinkes' mantle, as opponent of "the usages," expired soon afterwards. So did Samuel Parker, son of the Oxford Bishop ; a little later died the eccentric Nonjuring antiquary, Herne, who, though he would not support the Pretender, could not swear allegiance to the Georges. The Rebellion of 1745 galvanized the Nonjuring body ; and we have seen one of its members at Manchester taking a leading place amongst the followers of Charles Edward ; but the effect died away after the firm establishment of the Hanoverian House, and what remains of the history of the Nonjurors may be summed up in divisions and deaths. With that tendency to internal strife which is often found in parties on the point of extinction, the Nonjurors quarrelled on the subject of Lay Baptism. The quarrel began as early as 1733, and it continued for some time afterwards. The Regular Body, as it was called, admitted the validity of baptism by lay persons ; but Campbell and Lawrence opposed that view, and became leaders of a new division,—yet, whilst thus breaking up into separate fragments, one bond of union remained, they cherished intense dislike to the Established Church. A volume of letters, published

after the Rebellion, indicates that, at the time, the dislike, if possible, had become more intense than ever. Even "heresy," "schism," and "immoral worship" were alleged against all "complying ministers,"* and with characteristic perverseness, some of the separatists objected to the change which had been made in the calendar. In a publication entitled "The Happy Interview," by Lindsay, Truth and Common Sense are described as meeting at St. Paul's on the second of September, set apart in memory of the fire of London. "'Tis strange,' says Truth, 'that Common Sense should not reflect upon the notorious absurdity of addressing our prayers in solemn commemoration of an event as happening on this day, whereas the proper anniversary appointed by authority is yet to come, eleven days hence, and will then be passed over here without any notice.' Truth declares, 'How absurd it is to celebrate this, and the other three anniversaries of the Martyrdom, the Restoration, and the Gunpowder Treason (which are all four solemnities peculiar to this nation) on the nominal days instead of the real ones.' Common Sense is at last convinced that the people are deceived by almanacks and calendars." †

Carte, Law, and Lindsay bring up the rear of Nonjuring celebrities. Carte died in 1754, Law in 1761, and Lindsay in 1768. The first is well known as author of a "Life of the Duke of Ormond," and of a "History of England;" getting into trouble just before the Rebellion, he was asked by the Duke of Newcastle whether he was a Bishop; "No, my Lord," he replied, "there are no Bishops in England, but what are made by your Grace; I am sure I have no reason to expect that honour." Lindsay ministered to a Nonjuring con-

* Lathbury's "Nonjurors," 396.

† Ibid., 400.

gregation at Trinity Chapel, Aldersgate Street, acting at the same time as corrector of the press to Bowyer the printer, who belonged to the Nonjuring denomination. In 1747 he wrote to a friend, saying, "I removed last Christmas from the Temple, and took a lodging in Pear-tree Street, near St. Luke's, Old Street, where I spend my time chiefly among books or in my garden." He died at the age of eighty-two; and there is something pathetic in the picture of the conscientious old man, alone on the edge of the Great Babylon, reading divinity, and watching his flower-beds.

Law requires a fuller notice. Losing his fellowship at Cambridge, through a refusal of the Abnegation Oath under George I., he lived in privacy, attending Divine service in his parish church, and not identifying himself with any separatist movement. It is curious to find him for a time residing in the family of Gibbon the historian, who though he could have no sympathy with him in religious opinions had considerable respect for his moral and religious character. Mysticism declined in England after the close of the seventeenth century, but Law was a very decided mystic.* In one of his later books, entitled "The New Birth," he exhibits a theory of human nature, and of its Divine renewal, to the following effect:—that man, after the fall, lived an imperishable life, consisting of "a dark anger fire," like that of Satan, without any light of love, and that human beings are under the dominion of the stars and the elements. Still the Redeemer abides within men's souls, and a new nature may arise out of His gracious presence. The root of humanity is capable of being changed through Him, and the Satanic

* A valuable collection of Works on Mysticism is preserved in Dr. Williams' Library.

fire may give place to an angelic flame. The condition of attaining to a New Birth is naked faith in God, the surrender of self-will, self-seeking—in short, the entire resignation of ourselves to Him. Under some of Law's imagery may be recognized truths, which all spiritually-minded Christians embrace, but in his remarkable treatise much is contained out of harmony with Holy Writ ; and the tone of the work is likely to prepare a reader, who yields to its influence, for the adoption of very delusive ideas. Accordingly, this author at last adopted some of the strangest views of Jacob Behmen, and elucidated them in a series of prints, representing what is denominated "the anatomy of the spiritual man." Law's "Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life," is a work widely known ; and though there is in it much of a mystical complexion, it contains none of the extravagances found in the book on the "New Birth," and must have in it great spiritual power, seeing that it moved deeply the mind of John Wesley in an early stage of his experience, and so impressed Dr. Johnson that he said it was the first book which made him in earnest about religion.

CHAPTER III.

HAVING brought down the history of the Episcopal Church in England to the close of the reign of George II., the period we have reached seems an appropriate point at which to pause, and disentangle from other circumstances a thread of ecclesiastical enterprise which hitherto I have been unable to gather up and unwind. I allude to what was done under Queen Anne and the first two Georges, by Episcopalians at home, with a view to the diffusion of Christianity abroad. To follow at any length such work as was accomplished by them in foreign countries, would be out of place in volumes upon religion in England ; but it is necessary to glance at proceedings conducted in this kingdom, out of which the work at a distance took its rise, and also to indicate the objects which inspired the sympathies of the Church in our own country. A brief review of the subject from 1702 to 1760 will add some additional illustrations of our main historical theme.

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge as early as 1709 took an interest in the spiritual condition of the East, and rendered assistance to the Danish Mission in Tranquebar and other places. Plustcho and Ziegenbalg, two laborious agents, visited England to strengthen the sympathy with them, awakened by the

report of their adventures and their toils ; and in 1715 the latter of these worthies—a man of most distinguished zeal and constancy—was welcomed at a general meeting by a Latin address, to which he responded in “*a Malabaric speech*,” interpreted by the Secretary. Archbishop Wake evinced a regard for this remarkable man and his companion, John Ernest Grundler, in a letter containing rather impassioned language. “Let others,” he says, “indulge in a ministry, if not idle, certainly less laborious among Christians at home. Let them enjoy in the bosom of the Church titles and honours obtained without labour and without danger. Your praise it will be (a praise of endless duration on earth, and followed by a just recompense in heaven) to have laboured in the vineyard which you yourselves have planted, to have declared the name of Christ where it was not known before, and, through much peril and difficulty, to have converted to the faith those among whom ye have fulfilled your ministry. Your province, therefore, brethren, your office, I place before all dignities in the Church. Let others be pontiffs, patriarchs, or popes ; let them glitter in purple, in scarlet, or in gold ; let them seek the admiration of the wondering multitude, and receive obedience on the bended knee. You have acquired a better name than they, and a more sacred fame.”*

When, in 1724, three more missionaries, destined for Indian service, visited this country, they were received, not only by the members of the Society and the Primate, but by the Sovereign, who, at an audience, made inquiries respecting their future duties, and bestowed upon them a handsome present. Schulze,

* Anderson’s “History of the Colonial Church,” III. 12.

another name worthy of honour, carried on the work which Franck pursued too short a time—for he died in early life;—and then in the course of a few years, in 1749, no less a celebrity than Christian Frederic Schwartz reached England, on his way to India, in connection with the Danish Mission, to receive the benedictions of the Christian Knowledge Society, through its officers and friends. A Hebrew Bible belonging to Schwartz, also his autograph and the chair in which he was accustomed to sit, are preserved in the office of the Society for Propagating the Gospel.

Missions abroad properly belonged to that Society, which, as related in the last volume, sprung out of the elder one just noticed. The trustees had power given them to confer together, to use a common seal, to elect officers, to frame bye-laws, to collect subscriptions, and generally to conduct affairs. A president with vice-presidents and other necessary officers were to be elected yearly at some convenient place, “between the hours of eight and twelve in the morning,” and meetings accordingly were held for transacting business at different places chosen for the purpose. At one time the Cockpit in Whitehall—occupying the site of the present Privy Council Office, then crowded round by buildings—was the place of assembling; and thither went the rulers of the Church, with distinguished laymen, through narrow streets and under Holbein’s gateway, to listen to the reading of minutes, to hear reports of foreign proceedings, and to vote on important questions. At another time we see them walking eastwards, up Ludgate Hill to the Chapter House of St. Paul’s, or through Old Cheapside, to the vestry of Bow Church; and at a later period they are found winding towards the aristocratic neighbourhood of St.

Martin in the Fields, to confer and decide on various matters in Archbishop Tenison's Library. There were read on such occasions letters of application on behalf of English colonists, and also various Indian tribes. Moreover, letters came to hand, touching English factories in Europe, at Moscow, and Amsterdam. In 1703 it was reported that five Sachems, or kings of the Iroquois, promised Lord Cornbury, at a conference in Albany, that they would be obedient to the faith of Christ; that they were "glad to hear the sun shined in England since King William's death;" that they wondered the English should have a *Squa Sachem*, a woman king; but they "hoped she would be a good mother and send them some to teach them religion as well as traffic," and that they sent presents and made a "covenant so sure that thunder and lightning should not break it on their parts." *

The Society appealed for assistance to the nobility and gentry, to "ministers of extraordinary qualifications," and to merchants and rich traders, who had "reaped their temporal things plentifully by the labours and pains of those poor ignorant or misled creatures." These exhortations concluded with the remark, "It is not to be expected that many should rise up to the example of an unknown lady, who has cast in lately £1000 into the treasury of this Society; but he doeth acceptably who gives according to his ability." Very soon deputations were sent into the country to stir up the benevolence of Churchmen. Lincolnshire was more zealous than any other county, and special mention is made of help received from the Bishop of the Diocese, Dr. Gardiner. Devonshire also

* The report is printed in the Appendix to "Anderson's Colonial Church," III.

is mentioned as being animated by a missionary spirit. Wales, too, appears to have been distinguished amongst the Society's supporters. Endowments of land were bestowed, and annual subscriptions, some of large amount, were contributed. The Archbishop of Canterbury gave fifty pounds a year^{*}; the Bishops of London, Salisbury, Hereford, and Ely, twenty-five pounds each. Several names appear as annual subscribers of ten pounds. Sir John Charden, the traveller who applied his knowledge of the East to the elucidation of Scripture—whose grave is at Chiswick, and his monument in Westminster Abbey—liberally supported the Society, and gave to it just before his death no less a sum than £1000. Bray, Evelyn, Bishop Beveridge, and Dean Prideaux are numbered amongst its earliest friends and helpers.

In one of the annual sermons preached on behalf of the Society, Kennet, in 1712—at that time Dean of Peterborough, another prominent benefactor—dwelt upon “the letts and impediments in planting the Gospel of Christ.”* The preacher, in an epistle, dated 1716, to a correspondent at Boston, makes a statement which illustrates the subject of his missionary discourse, and shows the difficulties with which he and other good men had to contend, notwithstanding the care which seems to have been taken by the Propagation Society to send out fitting agents.† “The two great difficulties,” he says, “that still lie hard upon our

* All the annual sermons were printed, and a complete collection of them is preserved in the office of the S. P. G. The Rev. Josiah Pratt published some interesting extracts of them in a work entitled “Propaganda,” 1820.

† The Regulations are given at large in “Anderson’s History of the Colonial Church,” from which I have drawn the foregoing particulars. (Vol. III. 62 *et seq.*)

Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, are the want of sober and religious missionaries, few offering themselves to that service for the glory of God and the good of souls ; but chiefly to find a refuge from poverty and scandal. Such men, when they come to the places allotted to them, forget their mission, and instead of propagating Christianity, are only contending for rites and ceremonies, or for powers and privileges, and are disputing with the vestries of every parish, and even with the civil government of every province. The two mischiefs can hardly be redressed but by fixing schools and universities in those parts, and settling, we hope, two Bishops, one for the continent, another for the islands, with advice and assistance of presbyters to ordain fit persons, especially natives, and to take care of all the Churches." *

The two Societies I have mentioned divided between them so much of the British dominions as they were able to undertake—one, we have seen, looked to the East, the other turned to the West.

One of the first fields of labour selected by the Propagation Society was America, where religious communities already existed. Pennsylvania was planted by Quakers, and New England by Congregationalists ; and large provision had been made for the spiritual wants of people attached to those persuasions. At the commencement of the last century, two of the most active and zealous agents supported by English Episcopalians, were George Keith, already mentioned, and John Talbot, who employed themselves chiefly in exposing the errors of the Quakers, whom they denominated "heathen," and in opposing Congregationalists, whom they counted schismatics, with the view of

* "Life of Kennet," 123.

bringing them over to the Episcopal communion. The correspondence of the two men just named * largely relates to controversies of this description ; and, as might be expected, a great deal of bad feeling was in this way engendered on both sides. Mutual resentments were kindled and kept alive, and each party misunderstood and misrepresented more or less the objects and intentions of the others. Keith incited Talbot to ever-increasing zeal in this new crusade ; and Talbot praised Keith for his wonderful exertions in support of the Church against the sectaries. Talbot was charged with Jacobite tendencies. No imputation of the kind extended to Keith ; and whether the former was justly suspected or not of political disaffection, he certainly incurred at last the displeasure of ecclesiastical authorities at home by coming over to England and obtaining consecration as a Bishop at the hands of Nonjurors. Not a little bitterness continued to exist throughout the period now before us, between some of the agents of the Propagation Society and those of the English-speaking population of America who were treated as schismatics ; there were, however, instances in which a more tolerant and Christian spirit was manifested ; and, in a few cases, at a later date, something like co-operation obtained. " We have got a small chapel at Windsor," says a missionary in 1771, " which answers for a church for me, for a meeting-house whenever a Dissenting Minister happens to come that way in my absence, and for a school-house on week days. It was built by subscription of the inhabitants indiscriminately, Churchmen and Dissenters, according to

* Records of the S.P.G. Society.

their abilities." * We may conclude that the managers of the Society were fairly represented by their agents abroad ; and that the exclusiveness of High Church missionaries in one place, and the liberal spirit of Low Church missionaries in another, corresponded with changes and varieties of sentiment existing in the Committee of Direction at home ; for it appears that early in the history of the Society, a Committee, although not provided for in the charter, began to undertake the guidance of affairs.

Besides those in America who professed Puritan or Quaker principles, there were numbers who professed no ecclesiastical principles at all, and were living in the neglect of religion altogether. Such people needed spiritual instruction, and it was an act of Christian charity on the part of the Propagation Society, to seek, as it very earnestly did, in many parts, to supply what was so urgently required.

The history of the Society includes an account of labours carried on by its agents or friends amongst the negroes of North America and South Carolina. The missionaries were directed to give assistance in their Christian education, and a school for that purpose was opened in New York.† But in the first of the fields of labour just mentioned, untoward circumstances seem to have checked all progress,—especially a negro conspiracy so early as 1715, which brought reproach upon one of the missionaries, whose conduct, however, was vindicated by the Colonial Governor. In the year 1727 the Bishop of London sent a letter to the masters and mistresses of families in the English plantations, earnestly exhorting them to encourage and promote the

* Hawkins's "Missions of the Church of England," 363.

† Humphrey's "Historical Account," 233.

instruction of their negroes in the Christian faith.* Nor do the American Indians appear to have been overlooked ; they were met with and instructed in the far north, and a touching story is told of a Mohawk warrior, so late as 1818, who, in the recesses of a forest, told Bishop Hobart, of New York, how he had, in his young days, heard the gospel preached by an agent of the Society, and, after the lapse of half a century, had not forgotten the truths which then he learned.

Amongst the S.P.G. records is an interesting letter on the state of Christianity among the Christianized Indians, signed by Increase Mather, Cotton Mather, and Nehemiah Walter—addressed to Sir William Ashurst, “Governor of the Corporation for the Propagation of the Gospel.” Josiah Torrey is spoken of as a hopeful young man who had learned the Indian tongue, and had begun to preach in that language. “The gravity of the natives,” as he reports, “and their diligent attendance in the time of worship, with the affectionate confessions of such as are admitted into the Church, made me hope that many of them may have the work of the Spirit wrought in them, according to the working of the mighty power of God. Their method respecting those that are admitted into their Church Communion is more according to the manner of the Churches in primitive times, than is now practised among the Churches in most parts.” Very interesting particulars are given of the mode of admission, resembling that of the early Congregationalists, which may be accounted for when we find it stated, “They were taught by the Apostle Eliot, his name is of wonderful authority among them.” †

* Humphrey’s “Historical Account,” 257.

† The Mathers were New England Congregationalists. (“Jour-

Newfoundland, not only visited by sailors and fishermen in search of seal skins, and other ocean spoils, but inhabited by 7000 Englishmen, attracted the attention of the Society in its earliest years; but the efforts to meet its wants were feeble and tardy. A church was built at St. John's in 1705, and a missionary laboured there; but not until 1722 do we find another planted in the neighbourhood, and the first appears to have depended for support upon the liberality of the Newfoundland merchants. Other clergymen followed, only, however, at lengthened intervals; also the reports continue to disclose the paucity of fitting men who presented themselves for the work, also the same circumscribed pecuniary resources which formed a theme for lamentation from the commencement of the enterprise. Educational efforts of different kinds were put forth in the West Indies; and in Barbadoes a college, called General Codrington's College, was established and entrusted to the care of "The Society for the Preparation of Scholars and the Supply of Ministers for these Parts." *

The names of several missionaries little known are mentioned in the Society's annals as worthy of honour—one only, and it is a very remarkable one, can be here particularly noticed. The Reverend Clement Hall laboured in North Carolina, and acted as a missionary

nal," August, 1705, S.P.G. Records. Appendix to "Journals," 1701, No. LXVI.)

* Mr. Pratt, in his "Propaganda," 52-55, gives a chronological table from 1718 to 1818 of the stations, numbers and stipends of the missionaries and schoolmasters employed by the S.P.G. In 1718 the salaries for thirty-one agents amounted to £1,526. In 1719, for twenty-nine agents, the salaries amounted to £1,396. The next year the agents were twenty-seven and the expenditure £1,261.

amongst the Indians of Chowan County and the neighbouring districts. On one occasion, within three weeks, he preached sixteen times, also baptizing four hundred children and twenty adults. Chapels and court-houses were seldom large enough to accommodate the multitudes who crowded to his ministry, so that he had to preach in the forest, by the river-side, and on the sea-shore. It is computed that within eight years before 1752, he journeyed fourteen thousand miles, preached about seven hundred sermons, and baptized above six thousand children and grown-up people, besides performing countless other offices. The temporal aid he received from the Society was small, never exceeding £30 a year. What the inhabitants of the colony contributed did little to eke out the miserable pittance, and hence it has been inferred that this self-denying and diligent man must have had some resources of his own. "In weariness and painfulness, yet with faith and hope unbroken, he persevered unto the end; and at the expiration of four years after his appointment to St. Paul's, worn out with sickness and hard toil, Clement Hall closed, in the bosom of an affectionate and grateful people, a career of pious usefulness which has been rarely if ever equalled." *

Above others that could be mentioned as instances of zeal on behalf of work abroad, there were two men of wide and lasting fame, whom it would be inexcusable to pass by—Wilson and Berkeley. Thomas Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man—whose life in the world-known island on the Irish Sea has been so gracefully described by the last great hymnologist of our

* Hawkins's "Missions of the Church of England," 79. Anderson, III. 492, 493.

day—not only laboured to promote the spiritual well-being of the Manx population, but took a deep interest also in the propagation of the gospel in foreign lands. He devised a scheme “for educating young persons within the Isle of Man, in order to be sent abroad for the propagation of the gospel,” and seems to have made some proposals to the Society to that effect; for in 1711-1712, the Report states that the Society had waived the acceptance of Bishop Wilson’s proposal upon a prospect that Codrington’s College, already referred to—a College founded out of an estate left by a Governor of Antigua who bore the name—might be a more convenient seminary to provide in those parts for the education of scholars and the supply of ministers. In 1699, Wilson had issued a tract on “The Principles and Duties of Christianity,” for the use of the people in the Isle of Man—the first work ever printed in the Manx language;—in this little publication is found the germ of a larger work published by him in 1740. He had been early associated with Bray, one of the founders of the two Societies at whose proceedings we have glanced, and had caught the missionary spirit of that remarkable man. Just before the last-mentioned date, he had met with General Oglethorpe, the founder of the colony in Georgia, who had greatly excited the Bishop by a conversation he had with him respecting the Indians in that quarter of America.* Wilson’s enlargement of his tract on “The Principles and Duties of Christianity,” took the form of “An Essay towards an Instruction for the Indians,” and consisted of dialogues between an Indian and a missionary. The first nine dialogues contain such instruction as is needful to prepare for baptism. The remainder explains

* Anderson, III. 325.

the nature of that ordinance, and of the Lord's Supper ; together with an exposition of the Creed, the ten Commandments, and the Lord's prayer.

The other instance of extraordinary zeal was no other than George Berkeley, one of the literary celebrities of the age. He published "Three Dialogues," in which he attacked prevalent materialistic theories, but overshot his mark, by maintaining that we cannot prove the existence of matter ; the existence of mind being, he said, the only thing of which we are conscious. In his "Alciphron, or Minute Philosopher," he endeavoured to construct a defence of Christianity, in part on the sandy foundation of his own philosophy, but to a wider extent he worked on familiar and satisfactory grounds, displaying in the whole production consummate literary skill. His "New Theory of Vision," and "Principles of Human Knowledge," further develops the character of his philosophy ; and his Essay entitled "Siris," written under the inspiration of Plato, presents wind or spirit as the motive power of the universe—the cause of all other causation. Whilst busily engaged in these and other literary undertakings, Berkeley was by no means absorbed in such pursuits, but directed his supreme regards to the duties of his high calling as a minister of Jesus Christ. Being, like Swift, a native of Ireland, and holding preferment in the Sister Isle, he has not come under our notice in describing the religion of England. But his connection with English missionary operations now brings him within view. The companion of Addison, of Steele, of Atterbury, of Swift, of Arbuthnot, and of Pope, he seems to have delighted everybody whom he met. Pope ascribed, "To Berkeley every virtue under heaven."*

* Epilogue to "Satires." (Dial. II., l. 73.)

Atterbury declared, "So much understanding, so much knowledge, so much innocence, and such humility I did not think had been the portion of any but angels, till I saw this gentleman ;" * and Swift, when recommending him as a young man to the Earl of Peterborough as chaplain and secretary, assigns as a motive, "This, I think I am bound to do, in honour and conscience, to use all my little credit towards helping forward men of worth in the world." † In 1724 Berkeley received the Deanery of Derry ; and this and other circumstances indicative of the position and popularity of the man, are introduced simply to bring out in due relief the intensity of his missionary ardour. This induced him to sacrifice his Irish home and his English acquaintanceships, that he might execute a plan for extending Christianity in distant plantations and amongst the heathen, by means of a College for the education of young men. Not only did he exhort others to take up the cross ; he took it up himself. These are his words : "For himself he can only say, that as he values no preferment upon earth so much as that of being employed in the execution of his design, so he hopes to make up for other defects by the sincerity of his endeavours." ‡ He referred to what had been done by Spanish and French missionaries, and by their example he sought to inflame the zeal of the Church ; and then proceeded to notice objections current in those days—such as are not unknown in ours—that there was work enough to do at home, and that no success could be expected among savages.

* Duncombe's "Letters," 106, 107.

† Scott's "Life of Swift," 155-158.

‡ "Proposal for the Better Supplying Churches in our Foreign Plantations," Berkeley's "Works," III. 213-230.

To the first he replied, that religion, like light, is imparted without being diminished, that what is done abroad can be no hindrance to the conversion of infidels at home ; to the second, that ignorance is not so incurable as error, and that the savage Americans, if unimproved by education, are also unincumbered with superstition and prejudice.

Such representations indicated the missionary spirit which throbbed in Berkeley's breast, and which he sought to infuse into the bosoms of his brethren. America especially aroused his benevolent aspirations. With a prophetic eye, and walking in George Herbert's footsteps, he looked to the new hemisphere, and sung the well-known verse—

“Westward the course of Empire takes its way ;
The four first Acts already past,
A fifth shall close the drama with the day ;
Time's noblest offspring is the last.”

Banquets are nowadays common appendages to benevolent societies. A banquet of a peculiar kind occurred in 1726, when Berkeley was full of missionary projects for America. Lord Bathurst relates that, “The members of the Scriblerus Club, being met at his house at dinner, agreed to rally Berkeley, who was also his guest, on his scheme at Bermudas. Berkeley having listened to the many lively things they had to say, begged to be heard in his turn, and displayed his plan with such an astonishing and animating force of eloquence and enthusiasm, that they were struck dumb, and after some pause, rose up all together, with earnestness exclaiming, ‘Let us set out with him immediately.’” *

* Warton on Pope, quoted by Mackintosh, *Prely. Diss.*, “*Ency. Brit.*” 350.

Not only came there a flash of excitement after the eloquent appeal ; but there exists a list in Berkeley's handwriting of promised subscriptions for Bermuda, including £300 from the Dean of York and his brother ; £500 from a lady who desired to be unknown ; £500 from Lady Betty Hastings, and £200 from Sir Robert Walpole, etc.* Berkeley aimed at founding a College out of lands in St. Kitt's, ceded to the English Crown by the French at the peace of Utrecht ; and, to secure the boon, applied for a Royal Charter under sanction of Parliament. After six weeks' struggle against an earnest parliamentary opposition, he saw his point carried in the House of Commons by a large majority, in May, 1726 ; and in writing to Prior the poet, he said, in reference to his antagonists, "But, God be praised, there is an end of all their narrow and mercantile views and endeavours, as well as of the jealousies and suspicions of others (some whereof were very great men), who apprehended this College may produce an independency in America, or at least lessen its dependency upon England." †

A College was to be founded in the Bermudas, and Berkeley was to be the first President. The vision brightened before him ; but delays came, difficulties arose, and George I. died ere the Charter received the broad seal ; but that important addition was fixed to the instrument at last, and forth sailed the zealous Irishman for Rhode Island—a convenient spot, it was thought, for holding intercourse with the Bermudas. The wardens of the English church, the vestrymen, and the people of Newport, led by the Chaplain, repaired to the Ferry Wharf to welcome one announced by the pilots as "a great dignitary of the Church of

* Anderson, III. 350.

† Ibid., 351.

England, called 'Dean.'” In Rhode Island—where the famous Baptist Roger Williams had established absolute religious liberty—Berkeley built a house; and at Newport he was wont to preach. “All sects,” and Rhode Island was full of them, “rushed to hear him: even the Quakers, with their broad-brimmed hats, came and stood in the aisles.”*

It was in¹ a valley amidst hanging rocks, with a natural alcove, that he sat and wrote his “Alciphron;” and the chair in which he sat for the purpose is still preserved as a relic; but his philosophical dreams could never drive away his missionary desires, though his fondly cherished hopes were soon extinguished. This arose from circumstances which reflected the utmost disgrace upon a number of persons who had helped to obtain the Charter, and who had buoyed up Berkeley all the way through with promises, which were never fulfilled. Twenty thousand pounds had been expected; “but if you ask me as a friend,” said Sir Robert Walpole, “whether Dean Berkeley should continue in America, expecting the payment of £20,000, I advise him by all means to return home to Europe, and to give up his present expectations.”† He had to give them up for ever. His missionary zeal, after a short flash of fashionable sympathy, found little or no response amongst numerous English friends and admirers, who were only too glad to see him back in his old haunts. Queen Caroline welcomed him at Court, delighted in his conversation, and admired his character; in 1734 he was consecrated Bishop of Cloyne. Yet he remained faithful to his first love, faithful even unto death. He sent to Yale College “the finest collection of books,” it is said, “that ever

* Uppike's “Hist.,” 120. † Anderson, III. 366.

came at one time to America." He made over to the same institution the property he possessed in Rhode Island, known as "the Dean's farm," containing ninety acres. After paying back to subscribers the sums they had given for the undertaking he was now compelled to relinquish, he found £200 left unclaimed, and this he contributed to the Propagation Society in the year 1747.

In 1732, soon after his return from America, he preached the Annual Sermon for the Society, with the great advantage of having been an eye-witness of what was going on abroad ; first he bore witness to the good character of the missionaries, and then alluded to a peculiar difficulty with which they had to contend. He said, "An ancient antipathy to the Indians—whom it seems our first planters (therein, as in certain other particulars, affecting to imitate Jews rather than Christians) imagined they had a right to treat on the footing of Canaanites and Amalekites—together with an irrational contempt of the blacks, as creatures of another species, who had no right to be instructed or admitted to the sacraments, have proved a main obstacle to the conversion of these poor people. To this may be added an erroneous notion that the being baptized is inconsistent with a state of slavery."

Berkeley was anxious for the establishment of Episcopates in the American Colonies ; and this circumstance brings before us a fact of importance in the history of the Propagation Society, and of Episcopalian missionary efforts on the other side the Atlantic, down to the establishment of American Independence. It was very natural that zealous Episcopals at home should desire to see their own ecclesiastical system in complete order amongst their

brethren abroad; and equally natural that the latter should in this respect sympathize with the former. Great inconvenience attended the ordination of colonial clergymen in this country; and the Episcopal supervision of them in America by the Bishop of London, who had to include them within his diocese, led to misunderstandings and contentions, which were not only unpleasant, but really scandalous. This was especially the case when Gibson held the metropolitan see. Sherlock, afterwards, in 1752, felt himself in a most distressing position, and wrote to the colonists, saying, "I think myself at present in a very bad situation: Bishop of a vast country, without power, or influence, or any means of promoting true religion; sequestered from the people over whom I have the care, and must never hope to see. I should be tempted to throw off all this care quite, were it not for the sake of preserving even the appearance of an Episcopal Church in the plantations."*

But though the desire of an American Episcopate was strong, and the efforts in relation to it were vigorous and persevering, the scheme was frustrated. Some English clergymen opposed it. Archdeacon Blackburne did so, calling it "an empty chimerical vision which deserves not the least regard,"† and the attempt was still more severely condemned afterwards, by one who reached the Episcopal bench. There were legal difficulties connected with the subject, arising out of the peculiarity of the Episcopate in England, where Bishops are Peers, and form part of the national Parliamentary Constitution. What was the bearing of English law on the institution of Colonial Bishopricks,

* Anderson, III. 376, 433.

† Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

was then a perplexing question ; and in addition to this circumstance was another obstacle—the opposition of the Colonists, many of whom, especially the New Englanders, had a traditional dislike to Bishops, inherited from their forefathers, who had been driven out of their own country in days when Prelates persecuted Puritans, Presbyterians, and Independents. To this opposition, as very formidable, Archbishop Secker referred in a letter written in 1754, saying, “For so long as they are uneasy, and remonstrate, regard will be paid to them and their friends here, by our Ministers of State.” The want of success on the part of Church rulers in this respect may be further attributed to the ecclesiastical indifference of the Ministers of State. Neither Sir Robert Walpole nor the Duke of Newcastle, upon whom the Colonial administration long devolved, cared for the spiritual interests of America ; they looked at Colonial questions entirely from a political point of view, and were deaf to the appeals of men who were earnest in the pursuit of religious ends. Perhaps, beside other causes for the disappointment of such persons, there might be a wish to retain every possible bond of dependence between the American colonists and the Home Government. Repeated allusions occur in the correspondence on this long-agitated question, to the danger of the colonies becoming “independent of the salutary control of the mother country.” *

It would seem that the most effectual of all the causes specified was the opposition of New England, the government of which was in the hands of Independents. To overcome this opposition, advocates of the Episcopate argued that no coercive power was

* See Anderson, III. 377, 437.

sought, that the only authority desired was within the Episcopal communion for purely spiritual purposes, that the colonists were not to be charged with the support of the Bishops, and that there was no intention of placing them where Nonconformity had decidedly gained the ascendant.* The desire was natural, the explanations were satisfactory, and resistance made was unjustifiable, though some excuse may be urged on the ground that the New England fathers had suffered much from the conduct of Bishops a century and a quarter before.

* Anderson, III. 432.

CHAPTER IV.

I NOW return to the History of Nonconformity under the Second of the Georges.

Thomas Bradbury was no great friend to his brother who reformed English psalmody, and he would contemptuously speak of "Watts' whims." The two men were cast in different moulds; one so political and pugnacious could have little sympathy with one so recluse and peaceful. Still Bradbury served the cause of Dissent in particular, and the cause of religious liberty at large, by his indomitable courage and constant activity. We have seen him with Bishop Burnet, and at Court, after the accession of George I. It remains to state, that Bradbury continued afterwards diligently to fulfil his pulpit duties. He could not cease to be a polemic. Against Socinianism, against Arianism, against Antipædobaptism, he drew his bow to the very last, and his final utterances were in harmony with his whole life. He preached in 1759, on the anniversary of the accession of George I., from the words, "This man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land." * A Royalist and a patriot, fond of singing "The Roast Beef of Old England," he is said to have been a man of generous nature and of warm affections. Whatever asperity

* Micah, v. 5.

there might be in his writings, it is said, he was by no means deficient in Christian charity, and that his vices leaned on virtue's side, for he was open and honest, and simply expressed the sentiments of his heart.*

In pursuing this History, I meet with difficulties arising out of the conditions of Dissent. There is a great want of *fixity* in the circumstances both of ministers and their congregations. Many changes occurred in their local position, some buildings used for worship were occupied only for a time, Churches migrated from spot to spot, and elder communities became extinct, or were divided into separate parts. Hence arises confusion in records of the period; at times one is at a loss to determine with what community or with what locality a particular minister is to be chiefly associated. Some difficulties will be avoided, and clearness and consistency will be given to my narrative, if, instead of describing London pastors mainly in relation to the flocks they fed, I group them together, in divisions determined by duties of a characteristic kind which they are known to have discharged. Lectureships formed a prominent institution. Discourses were appointed to be periodically delivered at particular places, and their delivery was assigned to different persons, who associated themselves together according to a permanent plan.

Of this kind three centres appear, with which leading ministers were connected. The first is the Old Jewry, which became a distinguished neighbourhood under Charles II., where stood the magnificent mansion of a merchant prince, which vied with the proudest abodes of nobility. A Presbyterian meeting-house, of a modest description, was erected there in 1701, and is

* Wilson's "Dissenting Churches," III. 532.

described in 1808 as still existing. In it more than one Lectureship was established. The first was in 1723, "set on foot on a Tuesday evening, for the purpose of stating and defending the evidences of natural and revealed religion." Thither for six months in the winter, for to that season they were restricted, London citizens repaired for the purpose of hearing two celebrated Divines, Lardner and Chandler. Every reader is acquainted with Lardner's "Credibility," whence Paley and others have derived materials for more popular productions, as out of the columns, arches, and walls of ancient Rome, modern architects have constructed palaces. As to ecclesiastical government, Lardner was a Presbyterian; as to theology, he entertained peculiar views of the Person of Christ, believing that in His true and proper humanity, the *Logos*, which is "the Divine power and wisdom," marvellously dwelt, that He was miraculously conceived, and that He possessed Divine qualities or perfections. At the time he became a Jewry Street Lecturer his fame had scarcely commenced; and as his elocution was bad, his style inelegant, and the substance of his discourses dry and unattractive, his audiences were not likely to be very large or much interested. To other disadvantages, he added one thus described by himself: "I am so deaf indeed at present, that when I sit in the pulpit, and the congregation is singing, I can hardly tell whether they are singing or not." * It is curious, however, to learn, that notwithstanding this infirmity, he was visited by persons of various professions and different countries, who, provided with pens and ink, maintained communion by the tedious process of writing what they wished to

* "Memoirs of Lardner," 11.

say. Far otherwise in point of attractiveness was Chandler, who carried on the Lecture by himself after Lardner's retirement. He has been noticed already, and here I may add, that though so familiar with Greek, that he could write it with as much ease as English, yet, even whilst pastor of a Presbyterian Church in the Old Jewry, he was so needy, owing to losses and misfortunes, that, to eke out a living, he kept a bookseller's shop. His works are numerous, and remarkable for their ingenuity; but, like Tertullian, he often appears, when advocating the cause of Revelation, too much in the light of a special pleader. This is especially the case in his "Critical History of the Life of David," in which he unjustifiably palliates the crimes of his hero. His conferences with Bishops on the subject of a comprehension have been mentioned, together with the remarks to which that circumstance gave rise; and it may be, that for some such reason, and for a certain political connection he had with Lord Bute, suspicions arose touching his sincerity as a Nonconformist. Yet, with a keen sense of denominational defects, he maintained an honest denominational attachment; for when, on his admitting that certain things amongst Dissenters gave him offence, a Prelate jocosely asked, "Why, Doctor, do you not leave them?" he replied, "My Lord, I would, if I could find a worthier body of people." Towards the close of life he was wont to say, "that to secure the Divine felicity promised by Christ, was the principal and almost the only thing that made life desirable. That to attain this, he would gladly die, submitting himself entirely to God, as to the time and manner of his death, whose will was most righteous and good; and being persuaded that all was well which ended

well for eternity.”* Chandler was a popular preacher. His appearance, aided by clearness of voice, and distinctness of utterance, favourably impressed his hearers; and if the congregations when Lardner delivered the Lecture were small and uninterested, it may be well imagined that Chandler attracted large assemblies and riveted their best attention.

But the Old Jewry had a still more popular lecturer in James Foster, a General Baptist minister in Barbican, and afterwards pastor of an Independent Church at Pinner’s Hall. So renowned did he become, that Pope celebrated him in the well-known lines,—

“Let modest Foster, if he will, excel
Ten metropolitans in preaching well.”

His popularity in fashionable circles was owing, it is said, to the circumstance of a person of rank happening to enter his meeting-house during a shower of rain, and becoming so enchanted with what he heard, that he extolled its excellence to his friends, and so drew them to hear the Old Jewry orator. As Foster certainly relinquished a belief in orthodox doctrine on some points, he incurred the charge of infidelity, and this he met by saying, “he esteemed it an honour to be a firm believer and, from devotedness of mind, a preacher and public advocate for the Christian institution.” “I think,” he adds, “those justly chargeable with great baseness, pusillanimity, and hypocrisy, who either preach or profess it for the sake of popularity or any worldly consideration whatsoever, without being themselves real and hearty Christians.” In connection with this avowal, it is interesting to relate the following incident. A gentleman about to take orders

* Wilson, II. 377.

in the Church of England called on Foster, to converse with him respecting the difficulties of Christianity. "Have you asked," said Foster, "a solution of your difficulties from God this morning? Have you prayed to the Fountain of all light for information?" "No," said the visitor. "Sir," rejoined the preacher, "you will excuse my gratifying your curiosity upon the subject of revelation, while you are chargeable with the breach of one of the first duties of natural religion." *

* Foster's "Discourses on Natural Religion," I. 269; "Protestant Dissenter's Mag.," III. 309.

John Dunton, the indefatigable versifier of an earlier period, had made it his business to sketch in rhyme the preachers of the day; and somebody, about the time to which this portion of my history relates, took up his pen and wrote lines in which, after dealing out to others unfriendly criticisms, he places Foster on the loftiest pinnacle. They are entitled, "Verses made on the Dissenting Ministers and found at Hamlin's Coffee-house by an Uncertain Author"—

"Behold how papal Wright, with lordly pride,
Directs his haughty eye on either side,
Gives forth his doctrine with imperious nod,
And fraught with pride addresses e'en his God.

Not so the gentle Watts : in him we find
The fairest pattern of an humble mind ;
In him the softest, meekest virtue dwells
As mild, as light, as soft as evening gales.

Tuning melodious nonsense, Bradbury stands
With head up-lifted and with dancing hands,
Prone to sedition and to slander free,
Sacheverell, sure, was but a type of thee.

Mark how the pious matrons flock around,
Pleased with the tone of Guise's¹ empty sound ;
How sweetly each unmeaning period flows,
To lull the audience to a gentle doze.

¹ Or Guyse.

Another centre of Nonconformist influence in connection with lecturing was Salters' Hall, where the Synod of that name had met. There was delivered the Merchants' Lecture, so called because intended for men of business, during an hour of the day when they could turn aside from common affairs for spiritual instruction. Dr. Wright—noticed in the lines just quoted—a Presbyterian pastor in Carter Lane, Doctors' Commons, “where people flocked in crowds to hear him, and there were continual accessions to the Church,”* is a name on the Lecturers' list. Dr. Herring, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, frequented Wright's ministry; and the latter is described as, “A serious, moving preacher, zealous for the promotion of vital godliness.” “He was zealous for the Presbyterian form of Church government, and, in doctrinal sentiment, a Moderate Calvinist.” His temper and spirit appear in his words: “I do not stick to say that I had rather be the author of the small book that shall be instrumental to save a soul from sin and death, and to bring it to heaven, than of the finest

Eternal Bragge in never-ending strains
Unfolds the wonders Joseph's coat contains;
Of every hue describes a different cause,
And from each patch a solemn history draws.

With soundest judgment and with nicest skill
The learned Hunt explains his Master's will;
So just his meaning and his sense so true,
He only pleases the discerning few.

But see the accomplished orator appear,
Refined in language and his reasoning clear;
Thou only, Foster, hast the pleasing art
At once to charm the ear and mend the heart.”¹

¹ MSS., New College. I have seen the lines in print.

piece of science and literature in the world, that tends only to accomplish men for the present scene of being and action." *

Daniel Neal, author of the "History of the Puritans," for many years pastor of an Independent Church in Silver Street, engaged with other ministers to deliver lectures at Salters' Hall in 1734, on the doctrines of Roman Catholicism, respecting which, at that time, there existed great excitement. Neal had then distinguished himself as an advocate for inoculation, when the practice met with much opposition, and had enjoyed an interview on the subject with the Princesses and the Prince of Wales, afterwards George II. "His doctrinal sentiments came nearest to those of Calvin, which he judged to be most agreeable to Scripture, and best adapted to the great ends of religion; but neither his charity nor his friendships were confined to men of his own opinion."† The pastor at Salters' Hall was John Barker, a friend of Dr. Doddridge. Like Chandler, he leaned to the idea of comprehension, provided it could be secured on reasonable terms; but, though he longed to break down walls of separation, he discovered that, under existing circumstances, any equitable scheme for the accomplishment of his object remained an utter impracticability.‡

Another centre of London Nonconformity is found in Lime Street, where stood "a meeting," swallowed up by the old East India House. There Robert Bragge, who is mentioned in the lines just quoted, held the office of pastor over an Independent Church; and there also a Lecture was established in 1730 for the exhibition and defence of Calvinistic doctrines, and

* Wilson, II. 139-146.

† Ibid., III. 100.

‡ Ibid., II. 52.

only men of a decided stamp took part in the institution. Chief of these was Dr. Gill, a Particular Baptist who read the Targum and Talmud, the Raboth and the Book Zohar, and enjoyed between twenty and thirty years' acquaintance with those formidable tomes: besides diligently studying the Fathers, the ecclesiastical historians and the rites and customs of Oriental lands, and also writing an Exposition of the Old and New Testaments in nine folios, and other publications in seven quartos. At Berry Street and Little Saint Helen's, Dr. Guyse filled the office of Lecturer. He suffered for his orthodoxy whilst a pastor in Hertford, and afterwards entered into controversy with an anti-Calvinistic opponent. Having encountered Chandler on the question, "What is meant by preaching Christ?" it is to the credit of Guyse, as well as his antagonist, that the dispute ended, as such things rarely do, in an affectionate reconciliation. Guyse published a Practical Exposition, in the form of a paraphrase, of little literary merit, lacking the erudition of Gill's ponderous works, but like his, proceeding in Calvinistic lines. To this class of Lecturers belonged Dr. Thomas Ridgley, a Divine chiefly remarkable for his "System of Divinity," in two folio volumes, in which he maintained the doctrine of Reprobation, yet explained it so as somewhat to take off the edge of objections to that tenet, in the revolting form it commonly assumed. Another Lecturer, now almost entirely forgotten, was Samuel Pike, pastor of an Independent Church in Thames Street. He was connected with the Merchants' Lecture at Pinners' Hall, and with another in Little Saint Helen's, which he conducted in concert with Samuel Hayward. He is noticeable as a disciple of Hutchinson, to be mentioned hereafter, and in a book of considerable

learning, entitled "*Philosophia Sacra*," which excited much attention, he maintained that the Scriptures were intended to teach us natural science, as well as Divine religion. He attacked the Newtonian philosophy, and appealed from the author of the "*Principia*" to the sacred writers, alleging that they teach "the manner in which the heavens operate upon themselves and upon all other matter;" that they assist us "to conceive of all natural causes and effects as mechanical, and free us from any perplexities about hidden qualities." The hidden quality against which this author directs his attack is Newton's principle of gravitation. And it may be added respecting Pike, that, being a staunch Calvinist, he published a commentary on the Assembly's Catechism under the title of a "*Form of Sound Words*," which occasioned a revival of the Calvinistic controversy, in which Pike was helped by a warden of one of the City companies, who, for his Oriental knowledge and the trade he followed, came to be called "the Hebrew tailor."*

Before leaving London, a word may be said respecting the education of ministerial students. A hundred and fifty years ago, Sweeting's Alley was a different place from the locality now. It was a narrow thoroughfare, lined by old-fashioned houses, with beetling brows, nodding under the shadow of the second Exchange. There stood a dwelling from whose front projected the sign of the King's Head. The proprietor, about the year 1730, was, in common with a few friends, much concerned about the state of religion, and earnestly desired to see it revived according to the theological type of Owen, Charnock, and Bates. They commenced a weekly meeting; and, the sign on the house becom-

* Wilson, II. 91.

ing identified with it, the association gained the appellation of the King's Head Society. The members afterwards assembled at the King's Head in the Poultry, and to them is attributed the establishment of the Lime Street Lectureship; beyond that, they took in hand the improvement of ministerial education. They apprehended that young men were accepted in the Academies before their piety was ascertained, or their views were adequately formed. They felt that such as devoted themselves to the Christian ministry ought to believe and practise the principles of the Gospel. Those who enjoyed their patronage were, from 1731 to 1735, sent to Samuel Parkins, a minister at Clerkenwell; from 1735 to 1740 they were entrusted to the care of Dr. Taylor. Subsequently, the work of tuition devolved on Thomas Hubbard, a Stepney pastor, who soon died, to be succeeded by Dr. Marryat and Dr. Walker.

Amongst minor archæological curiosities, we also read of Plasterers' Hall, in Addle Street. It early passed out of the hands of the Pinners, and came into the hands of the Plasterers, who, like some other Civic Companies, allowed their place of rendezvous, or some part of it, to be transformed into a place of Nonconforming worship. The building came to be employed as a Lecture Hall by Marryat and Walker; and there the candidates prosecuted their studies, not, however, residing with their tutors, but in the houses of neighbouring friends. In 1754 a formal union took place between this Society and the Fund Board, showing that mutual alienation had been overcome, and that both parties were now prepared to co-operate in a common effort.

In connection with Nonconformist educational plans

the name of William Coward is conspicuous. This London merchant of large fortune lived at Walthamstow, a favourite residence for wealthy Dissenters, and there he displayed his political principles by erecting in his pleasure grounds a statue of William the Third on horseback. He offered his hospitality to the celebrities of Dissent, under rigid domestic restrictions, for he would never admit visitors for the night after eight o'clock, or visitors at dinner after one. He had odd ways, being somewhat testy ; but he possessed a liberal disposition, and consecrated a large portion of his property to religious objects. He patronized the Berry Street Lecture, felt anxious to promote what he termed "preaching Christ direct," and thought of founding an Academy, of which he wished Dr. Doddridge to be principal. This scheme fell through ; but he continued whilst he lived to defray the expense of educating students at Northampton under that eminent Divine ; and by will he created a trust, amongst other purposes, for educating those who sought to enter the Independent Ministry.*

There still remains at Northampton an old square meeting-house, altered internally, but in outward appearance much the same as in 1750, with five windows and two doors in front, each surmounted by a penthouse, and, just under the dripping of the main roof, is a square sundial. In this building Doddridge, who, from his prominent position, has come repeatedly before us, preached from 1730 to 1751. He was born in 1702, and educated at Kibworth under the care of John Jennings, brother to the well-known author of "Jewish Antiquities." From his "dear light garret at

* See reference to this on page 13 of this volume, in connection with Lord Hardwicke's Mortmain Act.

Kibworth," the student, who became a great letter-writer, informed his friends of his progress in learning, a progress which, as the result of immense industry with slender advantages, gave promise of subsequent eminence. Doddridge commenced his ministry as successor to his tutor at Kibworth, at that time such an out-of-the-way place that the young man, in a characteristic, genial mood, told a friend, "I have not so much as a tea-table in my whole diocese, although about eight miles in extent, and but one hooped petticoat within the whole district." But he was not discontented, and informed another of his correspondents, "I am now with a plain, honest, serious, good-natured people; I heartily love them myself, and I meet with genuine expressions of an undissembled affection on their side. I do not go very much abroad, and when I am at home I can conveniently spend twelve hours a day in my study." He removed to Market Harborough in 1729, and there opened an Academy, and was ordained pastor over the Church in Castle Hill Meeting House, Northampton, in 1730. The four volumes of sermons printed from his MSS. afford a sample of his preaching in that place. In matter evangelical, in arrangement lucid, in imagery tasteful, in diction perspicuous, they must have secured attention and excited interest. Never very great, they were always very good; reminding one of English valleys full of cornfields, gardens, and brooks of water. His words are worth remembering by all preachers—"May I remember that I am not to compose an harangue, to acquire to myself the reputation of an eloquent orator, but that I am preparing food for precious and immortal souls, and dispensing the sacred gospel which my Redeemer brought from heaven and sealed

with His blood." * It seems to have been his practice to compose hymns suited to his discourses, and to commemorate the Lord's death once a month, on Sunday night, when, as the moon shone, people from the villages could conveniently attend divine service ; and one can picture them wending their way home, looking up to the blue sky, and thinking over their preacher's discourse, on "God the everlasting light of the saints above." Doddridge's hymns have a character of their own. He had not the poetical genius with which his friend Isaac Watts was endowed, and which he so fully appreciated. None of his own metrical compositions have the grandeur of certain psalms and hymns written by him who has been called "the Poet of the Sanctuary." But there is a sweetness and tenderness in Doddridge's versification on devotional subjects, in admirable harmony with his amiable character, which has made him a favourite with all denominations, and has given him a place in the hymnology of English Christendom which he is not likely to lose.

Doddridge acted as a theological professor. His Academy stood, indeed still remains with some alterations, in Sheep Street, with a row of pilasters in front, a specimen of Georgian architecture. There, at six o'clock on a summer's morning, he met his students. Later, at family worship, one of them translated from the Hebrew Bible ; and after breakfast the Doctor lectured, unfolding a string of "propositions," "scholias" and "lemmas," bearing on some branch of Ethics or Divinity. Civil Law, Hieroglyphics, Mythology, English History, Logic, Rhetoric, Mathematics, Anatomy, and Jewish Antiquities are enumerated as parts of the

* Sermon on "The Evil and Danger of Neglecting Men's Souls."

curriculum ; but surely these numerous subjects must have been treated in a very superficial way ; and it is a satisfaction in our own time to find in Nonconformist Colleges several professors appointed to a work which could not be properly accomplished by one person, however wise and good. Critical lectures, including germs of the "Expositor," were delivered weekly ; and polite literature was not neglected in this hive of industry. His pupils on an average numbered thirty-four, and he sustained his office for two and twenty years. Five of his pupils were members of noble families, and several became University professors, Members of Parliament, and officers in the army. About two hundred young men altogether passed under his care, among whom were one hundred and twenty ministers. Some were preparing for the Church of Scotland, and one for the Church of England. Pastoral theology and the composition of sermons received considerable attention, and the Professor failed not to inculcate the necessity of "preaching Christ." No doubt can be thrown on Doddridge's religious convictions ; but, in reference to scientific theology, he seems to have considered that moderation and charity required him to modify the utterance of opinions in the presence of those whose sentiments differed from his own ; and, as some of his students had little or no sympathy with him in his evangelical opinions,* he sometimes left an impression, that conclusions which he presented were either unsound or unimportant. But to the spiritual welfare of the students, by seeking to promote devotional habits and consistency of conduct, he paid the greatest attention ; and it would seem that

* I have noticed illustrations of this in some of Doddridge's unpublished letters.

such efforts were attended in many cases by beneficial results.

Doddridge was not heterodox on the redemptive work of Christ and the regenerating operations of the Holy Spirit. His views on these subjects were moderately Calvinistic. It is also clear that he fully believed in the Incarnation; but the mode in which he conceived of that mystery appears from his "Theological Lectures." He says: "The word, Person, commonly signifies one single, intelligent, voluntary agent, or conscious being; and this we choose to call the philosophical sense of the word; but in a political sense it may express the different relations supported by the same philosophical person; *i.e.*, the same man may be father, husband, son, etc., or the same prince, King of Great Britain, Duke of Brunswick, and Treasurer of the Empire." Some resemblance exists between Doddridge's explanation of the term Person and the language of Sabellius; but I question whether Doddridge would have adopted some modes of expression which are reported respecting the ancient Theologian. "God is so united to the derived nature of Christ, and does so dwell in Him," Doddridge says, "that by virtue of that union Christ may properly be called God." He also believed, with Dr. Watts, in the pre-existence of a created soul in Christ, and rested his belief on the same considerations as did his learned friend;* but a belief in the Trinity is explicitly declared in Doddridge's confession of faith, delivered at Kibworth and Northampton, when ordained at the first of these places, and when recognized as pastor at the second.†

* Doddridge, "Theological Lect.," Def. lxxix. cxxviii. cxxvi., Corollary I.

† The confession delivered at Northampton is printed in Wadlington's "Hist.," 1700-1800.

The main pillars of Doddridge's fame are his "Expositor," and the "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." The former, though partly superseded by subsequent works, still possesses exegetical value, and the improvements cannot be attentively read without spiritual edification. Perhaps the latter, with all its imperfections, is the best religious book of the kind published in the first half of the last century; certainly it attained an immense popularity, being not only circulated amongst all denominations, but translated into the principal languages of Europe. His "Principles of the Christian Religion, in plain and easy verse," is now almost forgotten, but it found at the time acceptance in high quarters. "I must tell you," wrote Dr. Ayscough to the author, "Prince George (afterwards George III.) has learned several pages in your little book of verses without any direction from me." *

Doddridge's correspondence gives a charming insight into the life of the period. He dates one letter from the house of a Nonconformist layman in Moorfields, as from "the castle of friendship," and another from the residence of Mr. Barker, "who prays as nobody else can pray," "such a Christian and such a friend as is very very seldom to be found or heard of." We find him drinking tea with Bradbury, and enjoying an evening with Mr. and Mrs. Godwin, the good lady lighting up six wax tapers to receive him, because she "knows he likes a light room." A letter from "dear Dr. Watts' study" informs us how he and Lady Abney came together to meet him, and how he was about to return

* I have been informed by a friend, that a relative of his who held an appointment in Windsor Castle, was once told by the King: "If I know anything of religion I owe it to Dr. Ayscough, and that at an early age."

to Newington in her ladyship's coach. He finds the poet "much enfeebled by his late fever, yet very conversable and better far than might be expected." "Miss Abney is grown finely tall, and my lady not older than last year." There are pleasant walks with friends in the goodly gardens of the hostess, a lady visitor there entering her protest "against ministers' wives wearing curled hair and large hoops."* Doddridge was cut off in the midst of his days. He died in 1751, before he reached the age of fifty. A cold, caught as he was on his way to a brother minister's funeral, brought on pulmonary consumption, which his friends vainly attempted to arrest by visits to Bath and Bristol, then famous resorts for invalids. No better result followed a voyage to Lisbon. The scenery on the banks of the Tagus, and the soft air breathed over the river revived his spirits, but he landed only to expire under the watchful care of his devoted wife. "The sudden change of air," she says, "which came on soon after we got into our lodgings, cut off every thing I had hoped from air and exercise, and, by the manner in which it affected him, I doubt not was the appointed instrument of Providence, to cut shorter his remaining days."† No man could be more ready to die. "It is pleasant," he said, "to read, pleasant to compose, pleasant to converse with my friends at home, pleasant to visit those abroad—the poor, the

* From unpublished letters.

† Unpublished letter. The insertion on Doddridge's tombstone at Lisbon is, according to a copy of it in my possession—"Philip Doddridge, D.D., died October 26th, 1751, aged 50." But, as he was born in June, 1702, he had not completed his fiftieth year. I have also under my care, amongst a few other Doddridge papers, a touching letter from Mrs. Doddridge to Dr. Warburton, immediately after her husband's death.

sick, pleasant to write letters of necessary business by which any good can be done, pleasant to go out and preach the gospel to poor souls who are thirsting for it and others dying without it, pleasant in the week day to think how near the Sabbath is ; but oh, how much more pleasant to think how near Eternity is, and how short the journey through this wilderness, and that it is but a step from earth to Heaven !”

Risdon Darracott, one of Dr. Doddridge's favourite pupils, became pastor of a Nonconformist Church in Wellington, Somersetshire, and he exceeded even his teacher in the zeal and unction of his ministry. Imbued with a Puritan spirit, he insisted upon doctrines which conspicuously shine in the theology of the Commonwealth ; yet he was free from some exaggerations and deficiencies in their style of instruction. With an eloquence which gained for him the appellation “Star of the West,” he combined assiduous pastoral oversight, and made an indelible impression upon the neighbourhood where he lived, so that, after the lapse of a century, his memory is far from being effaced. What is remarkable, whilst celebrated for his evangelical preaching, he, by a rare liberality of judgment, exposed himself to the suspicion of contemporaries, who looked upon candour and charity as treasonable dispositions. So animated was he in the work he had to do, that it was said he looked “like one that lived upon live things ;” and the vitality of his appeals manifested itself in their extraordinary results. His crowded place of worship, at a period when a country town in England did not commonly contain a church-going population, had to be enlarged, and still there remained pressure for want of room. He traversed the country round, set up charity schools, promoted

the circulation of religious books, and so diffused the power of Christianity, that "some very profligate and abandoned sinners were deeply struck." The effects produced by Baxter at Kidderminster were repeated by Darracott at Wellington. He describes ale houses on Sunday as empty, nothing done in the shops of barbers, no idle walkers in the streets, "but an air of solemnity through the whole town." The number of communicants rose from twenty-eight to three hundred, and numbers besides were more or less impressed by this Somersetshire preacher. When sickness arrested him in the midst of his toils, the seraphic fervour with which he expressed his love of the gospel, and his humble confidence in the hope of eternal life, cast fresh lustre on his name, and endeared him more than ever to his sorrowing people. He died at the age of forty-two, and his ministry proves, in connection with other instances, that this particular type of ecclesiastical character was not unknown in England during the first half of the eighteenth century.

Looking at Nonconformity elsewhere, we select Kidderminster, the scene of Baxter's ministry, where a strong Puritan element may be traced surrounded by influences of a different description. Two remarkable Nonconformist ministers successively occupied the "Old Meeting House" during the second generation of the last century. The memory of John Spilsbury, nephew of Hall, Bishop of Bristol, who highly esteemed him, and "frequently resided in his family," was fondly cherished through many years; and after him came Benjamin Fawcett, in 1744, one of Doddridge's pupils. I cannot leave Kidderminster without a word respecting "the Christian Merchant," as Joseph Williams, a member of the Independent Church in that town, was

commonly called. Alike remarkable for success in business, generosity in giving, wisdom in counsel, acquaintance with his Greek Testament, fervour of spirit in everything connected with religion, and indefatigable diligence in all well doing—he wrote a diary, published under the title of “The Christian Merchant,” which remains a proof of saint-like piety at a period when religious torpor is supposed to have been universal.

There were also forms of Dissent in England, of foreign extraction.

Modern Moravianism is the daughter of an elder faith, and has been nourished by traditions of its parental history. John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, both Bohemian Reformers in the fifteenth century, are claimed by Moravians as their spiritual ancestors; and there are links of connection between the Bohemian Church and our own country, through Anne, Queen of Richard II. A number of earnest souls denominated themselves *Fratres Unitatis*, or *Unitas Fratrum*, and from them modern Moravians have taken the name of United Brethren.

Count Zinzendorf, a native of Dresden, who combined eccentricity with spiritual goodness, and Christian David, a man of humble birth, founded, under romantic circumstances, the famous Moravian settlement in Lusatia, at Hernhut (the Lord’s watch), situated on the Hutberg (the watch hill). As early as 1717 Archbishop Wake expressed his satisfaction with what he heard of the Episcopal orders of the Brethren, and, in 1728, interest was manifested in England respecting the Hernhut settlement. Further information was sought, and David Nitschman and two others visited this country. They procured from a Professor

in the University of Jena, a letter of introduction to George II.'s chaplain, who did not receive them with much cordiality ; but by the Countess Lippe they were welcomed with love and joy. On their return they gave a report of their journey, and read letters carried over from sympathizing friends.* A more important visit was paid in 1735. A German band of emigrants on their way to Georgia, in the British American dominion, were recommended by Count Zinzendorf to the Governor and Trustees of the colony. The conversion of the heathen being the principal object contemplated, the sanction of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was sought on their behalf ; but the Royal Chaplain of the Colony opposed the plan on the ground that the Trustees wished to receive real exiles oppressed at home, not "those who were living at peace under Zinzendorf's wing." General Oglethorpe, Governor of Georgia, resisted the chaplain's arguments, and favoured the Moravian strangers ; and as a result, they were introduced to the Bishop of London, which eventually proved of great importance.

In January, 1737, Zinzendorf sailed from Helvoetsluys, and after a stormy passage reached London with his Countess, "a woman of great seriousness and sweetness." They hired a house near the office of the Georgian Trustees, and held a religious service soon after their arrival.† The Count had further missionary operations in his mind, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel entertained the idea that the Brethren in Georgia would be suitable to carry on work in South Carolina. A question arose whether

* Cranz's "History of the Brethren," translated by Latrobe, 129, and "Memoirs of James Hutton," by Benham, 17.

† Charles Wesley's "Journal," I. 66.

the dominant Church in the colonies would acknowledge the order of Brethren unordained by English Bishops. The matter being referred to Archbishop Potter, he assured a deputation "that, both from their writings and from personal intercourse, . . . he had been led to the conviction, that the Church of the Brethren is truly an apostolic and episcopal Church, whose doctrines contain nothing whatever militating against the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England." Potter afterwards said, "that without the consent of the King, as Head of the Church, he was not at liberty to make a further acknowledgment of the orthodoxy of the Brethren, but from his heart he could advocate their cause at the peril of injuring his own." Friendly relations being thus established, the Archbishop wrote a letter of congratulation to Zinzendorf on his appointment as Bishop, and about the same time there was a very affectionate correspondence between Zinzendorf and Doddridge.

Zinzendorf's visit led to the formation in this country of a small Society of Germans, who adopted some very peculiar rules. They related chiefly to times, places, and methods of meeting, with this very odd law in the centre; "That any who desire to be admitted into this Society, be asked, What are your reasons for desiring this? Will you be entirely open, using no kind of reserve, least of all in the case of love and courtship? Will you strive against the desire of ruling, of being first in your company, or having your own way? Will you submit to be placed in what band the leaders will choose for you? Have you any objections to any of our orders?" These were strange terms of communion, and if Moravianism had not contained in it something better, it must have soon

expired. A Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel next appears, followed by another formidable list of rules. Afterwards, in 1741, a thorough Moravian constitution was wrought out, and a synodical conference held in Red Lion Street; also Moravian hymns were printed, and there was published a Moravian specification of doctrine.

The Brethren being interrupted in their worship, protection was sought from the Archbishop, and he granted them a license, as "German Protestants called Moravian Brethren;" but this carried with it no legal security, and they were compelled at last to seek protection as *Dissenters* under the Act of Toleration. This troubled those of them who, while fraternizing with the Brethren, wished to retain their membership in the Church of England. Nor did Zinzendorf approve of this step, for he lodged a protest against it in the Archives of Lambeth. In 1742 a document appeared with this title, "The Congregation of the Lamb with its officers and servants as settled in London, October 30th." It contained a list of members, married and single, widows and widowers, in all seventy-two persons; the whole divided into classes or choirs, and almost every one appointed to some office in the brother and sisterhood; and with these arrangements the society increased,—the chief promoters of Moravianism in England being James Hutton, a London bookseller, and two "Oxford Methodists," already mentioned, John Gambold and Benjamin Ingham. Gambold did not intend to separate himself from the Church of England. He wished to retain a relationship to the national Church, and to uphold a peculiar kind of autonomy in subordination to it. This idea seems to have been carried out

so far that in 1749, Wilson, the Bishop of Sodor and Man, accepted an invitation from the Moravian synod in London to undertake an office of superintendence over the Brethren. The Bishop, however, had then attained his ninety-first year, and it is not likely that at such an advanced age the relationship between him and the Moravian Brethren became anything more than a nominal one. Gambold laboured with Hutton to promote Moravianism in London, and other parts of the country, and accounts are given of a school at Broadoaks, Essex, where schemes of education, characteristic of the community, were attempted, some of the children being afterwards removed to Mile End, and others to Buttermere in Wiltshire. In the latter place a Congregation was formed ; another was planted at Bedford, and missionary efforts were extended to Bath, Bristol, and Kingswood. As Gambold was active in the South, so was Ingham in the North, for he is described under the title of "The Yorkshire Evangelist." In 1742, twelve hundred persons are reported to have been, through his preaching, gathered into the Brethren's fold. A house and chapel, called Gracehall, were built at Pudsey ; but the chief monument of success was at Fulneck, near Leeds, called at first *Lamb's Hill*, where a Moravian establishment still remains. Ingham preached, made converts, "and left them to be ruled by others." He was "an Evangelist at large," helped by "earnest coadjutors." But all was not prosperity. Records of the Brethren, between 1745 and 1749, speak of the light and trifling spirit which had crept into almost all the congregations, both in doctrine and practice, followed by "deep shame and contrition in the hearts of the true brethren and sisters." *

* Tyerman's "Oxford Methodists," 123-133.

A curious circumstance befell the society just before the Rebellion of 1745. Some members scrupled at taking oaths, and thus became confounded with Nonjurors. They were consequently suspected of Jacobitism, and charged with being disloyal, and Papists in disguise. Their secret meetings were said to be designed for the dethronement of King George and the coronation of King James. The rumour went abroad that at chapel doors there had been unloaded chests and casks, containing firearms and gunpowder. Threats followed that the buildings should be destroyed, and these absurd accusations were silenced only after fruitless search for munitions of war.

In 1748 the history of Moravianism crosses the path of English legislation, and that for the same reason as led the Brethren to be called Nonjurors. They refused to take an oath. So did Quakers, and it was now proposed to place both on the same footing. General Oglethorpe pleaded their cause in the House of Commons, and an Act exempting them from taking oaths, after passing both Houses, received the Royal assent. But Zinzendorf wished for something beyond this, which should distinctly recognize the Episcopal orders of his Church. Accordingly, through his influence, and that of distinguished friends, the matter came before Parliament, and it was moved that a committee should be appointed to inquire into the claims of the Brethren. After two committees of inquiry, the first of them supported by Horace Walpole, and including amongst its members Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham, a favourable report was presented to the Commons; and when the measure reached the Lords the Prelates gave it their sanction. "It will

be an edification to myself," said Maddox, Bishop of Worcester, "and the whole Episcopal bench, and all true Protestants of England, if the British nation expresses itself in favour of the Brethren, for whatever benefit England confers upon this ancient confessor Church, must be an encouragement to all evangelical Christians throughout the world, to expect nothing but good from this country." The Bill passed. After this, Bishop Sherlock acknowledged the genuine Episcopacy of Zinzendorf, but told him, after reading what he had written on the Person and Work of our Lord, "On these subjects, there are expressions in many of your hymns, which though not erroneous, yet presuppose a continued absence from all earthly things, and enraptured love to Christ, which to me seems quite impossible." There are many puzzles in Moravian history, and this is one,—that in the same month, June, 1749, when the Count held loving fellowship with Sherlock, or soon afterwards, the former wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury, adding a postscript, in which he charged the Bishop of London with sinning "against the first principles of uprightness, equity, and prudence." Zinzendorf must have been an impetuous and imprudent man, and this, together with the extravagances of his theology, may serve to explain the censure he incurred.

As the establishments of the Brethren for charitable purposes involved large pecuniary responsibilities, difficulties overtook them between the years 1749 and 1753. Liabilities amounted to £20,000; and, as is often the case with communities no less than individuals, poverty at the door drove love out at the window. Troubles within attracted assaults from

without, and the year 1753 is described as "a year of deep distress, absolution, and reformation." * Better times followed, and even in the darkest hour of English Moravianism, enough remained to redeem the cause from censure; to the wonderful work of missions carried on by the Brethren, the English Moravians contributed, and in return they were stimulated and encouraged by what they heard from Greenland and the West Indies of apostolic zeal and heroic deeds, such as have excited the admiration of Christendom ever since.

Another form of religion brought over from the Continent, under different circumstances, must not be left altogether unnoticed. Towards the close of the seventeenth century Spitalfields became a French colony, and there from morning to night, from Monday to Saturday, might be heard the clack of looms producing lustrings and velvets, taffetas and silk stockings. An old French church in Threadneedle Street appears to have been a sort of cathedral for the early Huguenots in London, and thither for a while the Spitalfields folks were wont to repair. Other churches followed, as the French population thereabouts increased; and within fifty years no less than eleven were built east of Bishopsgate Street. The west end of London attracted the aristocracy. There, in the Savoy, Episcopal worship was celebrated in French; and besides, several French churches existed in the court quarters, Swallow Street standing in the same relation to them that Threadneedle Street had done to the opposite extremity of the metropolis. In a register still existing, are records of noble marriages and noble births, even

* For these and other particulars, see "Memoirs of James Hutton."

William III. himself in one instance appearing as god-father. It tells, too, of abjurations, and how one gave testimony of repentance, and another gave proofs of piety and morals, and how both confirmed these facts, as the register states, "by signing this record."

Amongst French clergymen, who for a while preached in this country, was James Saurin. He did not discharge ministerial duties in France before the revocation of the Nantes edict, but at a later period, after a short military career, he became a clergyman, and was called to the Hague in 1705, as minister extraordinary to the French nobles who resided there. With a handsome face, a charming expression of countenance, a commanding presence in the pulpit, sweetness and depth of voice, and gracefulness of action, he united strength of judgment, power of reasoning, and brilliancy of illustration. For a time he resided in London; and Abbadie, a French refugee, who had taken orders in the English Church, exclaimed, on hearing his fellow-countryman, "Is it a man or an angel who speaks?" Abbadie is said to have accompanied Marshal Schomberg, his friend, first to Holland, and then to England, from which we infer that he was with the marshal when he accompanied William in his voyage to Torbay, and landed in our country with the army of the Revolution. He entered the Established Church, and died Dean of Killaloe. Peter Allix, polemic and historian, fled after the Revocation, and reached London, where he appears for a time as minister of the French hospital in Spitalfields. Not eloquent like Saurin, his ministry was forcible and persuasive, and aimed, in an eminent degree, at the union of Protestant Christendom. Louis XIV., valuing his abilities and his learning, would fain have induced him to enter the

Catholic Church ; but he withstood temptation, and was repaid for doing so by the promotion accorded to him in the Church of England.

By the middle of the last century, French Protestantism in England was in a state of rapid decline. In 1731, the thirty London churches were reduced to twenty. Nine were closed in the interval between 1731 and 1782, when a jubilee sermon was pronounced in the French Church, Spitalfields, by Jacob Bourdillon, who then completed the fiftieth year of his ministry there. The eleven which then remained were hastening to their end. At the present day there exist but two. The naturalization of the exiles as English citizens, their adoption of the English language, their abandonment of foreign customs, their translation of former French names into Anglo-Saxon, these and other circumstances led to the obliteration of old lines which separated them from their neighbours—so they forsook the French churches to attend English ones, and the descendants of the Huguenots became Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Independents.*

Another Society, of foreign extraction, appeared in 1788, when Swedenborgianism was organized in this country, but the English development of the system belongs to the present century.

* Weiss' "*Histoire des Réfugiés Protestants*," and Smiles' "*Huguenots*" are my chief authorities.

CHAPTER V.

JOHN WESLEY was born at Epworth in 1703. Early incidents in such a life as his secure notice, not only because they gratify curiosity, but because they open windows into his early consciousness, disclose traits of his original character, and present germs of influence destined to take forms of unusual magnitude and importance. His escape from the burning parsonage made an impression on his mind respecting a special providence; and familiarity with the Epworth ghost stories made him feel to the last that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy. One of his idiosyncrasies comes out in an anecdote related by him to Dr. Clarke, how, when as a child, he heard any question about what he would like to eat, he replied with cool unconcern, "Thank you, I will think of it." "John," said his mother, "will do nothing unless he can give a reason for it." * And in this precocious development of the logical understanding the child was father to the man. The training at the Charter House prepared Wesley to endure hardships, and suggested to him ideas of discipline which, however contrary to the notions of many, did not seem at all unreasonable to him. The Society which he gathered round him at Oxford, we have

* Everett's "Life of Dr. Clarke," I. 249.

already seen. And it has been justly remarked, "had the young Fellow of Lincoln died in his thirtieth year, we can imagine that the tradition which might have preserved to Oxford the memory of the little Society, of which he was the head, would have presented itself to us as a dim foreshadowing of the religious movement connected with that University in our own day." * At the same time, his Oxford life had in it seeds of Methodism. Method and fellowship in religion were foundation stones in the small Society he helped to frame, and in the large Society which afterwards he governed.

His impressibility, seen in tender affection for beautiful and gifted sisters, and in warm friendship with the gentler sex, prepared for a lifelong habit of pure sympathy with Christian women. Letters brought to light of late years, exhibit him in correspondence under feigned names with Mrs. Delany and her sister. It was the fashion of the age; we notice it in the correspondence of Dean Swift, and in that also of Watts and Doddridge. Wesley styled himself *Cyrus*, and addressed the ladies mentioned as *Aspasia* and *Varanese*. The playful epistles which he wrote, albeit starched and stiff, like the fashionable hoops and ruffles of the day, place the founder of Methodism under an aspect not often recognized, but needing no apology. Wesley's notes about "the dear hills, the fields, and the arbour," "the faint light of the moon glimmering through the trees," and the gracefully turned compliment, "how little would the eye of the mind that surveyed them have missed the absent sun," † are youthful effusions which demonstrate natural habitudes

* Julia Wedgewood's "John Wesley," 38.

† "The Living Wesley," by Dr. Rigg, 72.

of sentiment, throwing a mild halo around graver and more gracious qualities in the founder of a new ecclesiastical organization. He was ordained deacon in 1725, and in 1727 began to serve a curacy in the parish of Wroot, Lincolnshire; whence he returned to Oxford in 1729. His family wished him to succeed his father at Epworth, and steps were taken to accomplish that end, but Wesley himself felt averse to it. The fact is, he was from the beginning filled with missionary zeal. It might almost be said to have come to him by inheritance, for when he expressed a wish to preach to the North American Indians, his mother exclaimed, "Had I twenty sons, I should rejoice, were they all so employed, though I should never see them more." His father, too, was inspired with zeal for foreign Missions. In later days, as he strove in all directions to make known the gospel, he could brook no restraints such as kept his clerical brethren within certain limits, but proclaimed as his watch-word, the memorable saying, inscribed on his mural monument in Westminster Abbey, "The world is my parish."

He went to Georgia in 1735, under the auspices of the Propagation Society, and out of its funds a salary was appropriated, which he scrupled to accept. These facts are recorded in the following minutes which, from their great interest, are subjoined in full: "At a meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts held on the 16th January, 1735⁵, a memorial of the trustees for establishing the Colony of Georgia in America was read, setting forth that the Rev. Mr. Samuel Quincy, to whom the Society had been pleased upon their recommendation to allow a salary of fifty pounds per annum, has by letter certified

to the said trustees that he is desirous of leaving the Colony of Georgia, and returning home to England in the month of March next, to which they have agreed ; and the said trustees recommend the Rev. Mr. John Wesley to the Society, that they would allow to him the said fifty pounds per annum from the time Mr. Quincy shall leave the said Colony, in the same manner Mr. Quincy had it. Agreed that the Society do approve of Mr. Wesley as a proper person to be a missionary to Georgia, and that fifty pounds per annum be allowed to Mr. Wesley, from the time Mr. Quincy's salary shall cease." "At a meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts held on the 21st July, 1738, it was reported from the Committee that they had read a letter from the Rev. Mr. Wesley, dated Savannah, July 26, 1737, in which he gives an account of his services among the inhabitants, and says his first design was to receive nothing of any man but food to eat and raiment to put on, and those in kind only that he might avoid, as far as in him lay, worldly desires and worldly cares ; but being afterwards convinced by his friends, that he ought to consider the necessities of his flock as well as his own, he thankfully accepted that bounty of the Society, which he needed not for his own personal subsistence." Thus it appears that the bounty of the Society was accepted by Wesley, not for himself, but on account of the necessities of his flock. His work in Georgia requires no notice in these pages—nor is it needful to dwell upon the history of the voyage, when he left England in company with certain Moravian missionaries, whose influence over their new friend, as will be seen hereafter, led to a close but brief relationship between him and the United Brethren. His love

affairs with Miss Hopkey, and other circumstances in the American episode of his life, do not require much attention from us.

Not many persons would write about love matters as Wesley has done in his journal, nor act respecting them in the doubtful and hesitating ways which he adopted. But they illustrate strongly the nature of the man, and inspire our sympathy even when we cannot commend him for wisdom. Wise and sagacious beyond measure as he proved in many respects, it must be confessed that in some of his innocent moods and acts, he in personal matters failed to unite the serpent with the dove. And is it not often the case that men, who in the larger affairs of life act with consummate ability, sharp-sightedness and prudence, appear at considerable disadvantage in some of the smaller affairs of their private history? It should also be borne in mind that the whole Georgian period of Wesley's biography must be distinguished in relation to his religious character, from the far longer and more important career which came afterwards.

After Wesley's return from Georgia he connected himself with the Moravians. In his journal, he speaks of their Society as "our Society," though it is important to notice, that this identification did not involve any separation from the Church of England. He esteemed the Moravians not as a sect, but as a band of brethren, who sought to promote their own edification by mutual fellowship, without renouncing previous ecclesiastical opinions. Differences afterwards arose, as might be expected; and the alienation of Wesley from Zinzendorf is a painful episode, into the particulars of which I cannot enter.

To understand Wesley's work we must study Wesley's

experience. A comparison between him and Luther is very instructive. In both cases a large space of time is covered with a succession of confessions, which, to persons not in sympathy with the men, indicate important points of change and progress, apparently inconsistent, and extremely perplexing. Yet a fundamental difference existed between the characters of the two. Luther had a mind eminently intuitional, glancing with an eagle's eye at truth, whenever it rose before him; Wesley had a mind eminently logical, getting at his conclusions by paces of argument; hence it happened that Luther's theology sprung out of his experience, out of his deep felt needs and their full supply, but Wesley's experience sprung out of his theology. First convinced of certain truths, he then applied them. He learned the *doctrine* of justification by faith before he exercised the faith which, in his apprehension, brought him into a justified condition.

Wesley passed through a series of convictions. First a High Churchman, but not Ritualistic, in the present acceptation of the term, or a believer in the Real Presence, he addicted himself to ascetic practices, attached great importance to fasting, maintained daily service, inculcated confession and weekly communion, re-baptized the children of Dissenters, and refused to bury those who were unwashed in the Episcopalian laver of regeneration. This phase of religious sentiment and this habit of religious practice did not, however, remain long; though a measure of the Anglo-Catholic element lingered in his mind and ways through many a long year afterwards. Mysticism for a while laid on him a strong hold, partly through the influence of William Law, and partly through the study of the "*Theologia Germanica*." But Wesley, according to his

own statement, never came into the full "quietude of mysticism;" and how he emerged from under its power he could not explain; that he did, however, decidedly renounce what, in this way, he had embraced, appears from his strong language: "Mystics are the most dangerous" enemies of Christianity, "they stab it in the vitals, and its most serious professors are most likely to fall by them." Then came another change. May 24, 1738, was a critical period. Wesley had regarded belief, chiefly in relation to creeds, as an intellectual exercise; but now, suddenly his eyes were opened to see, that Christian faith regards a Person rather than a proposition, that it is a moral as well as an intellectual act, that it carried with it the heart no less than the judgment. He "felt his heart strangely warmed, felt that he did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation," and "had an assurance given him that Christ had taken away his sin and saved him from the law of sin and death." Wesley's experience now became the same as that of Luther; not a dogma but a spiritual life, penetrated his spirit. At a fellowship meeting held in Aldersgate Street, in connection with a Church of England Society, as some one was reading Luther on the Galatians, a new light dawned on Wesley's soul, though he had been prepared for it by the teaching of his Moravian friend Peter Böhler; and it is interesting to notice a service he attended in St. Paul's Cathedral, the very afternoon of the same day,—when he heard the anthem—"Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice. O let Thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint. If Thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord who may abide it? For there is mercy with Thee, therefore shalt Thou be feared." "O Israel,

trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his sins." The words harmonized with his feelings, and prepared him for what he embraced a few hours afterwards. The Cathedral of St. Paul's thus becomes connected with Wesley's "conversion," and with the origin of Methodism.

But though the change at this moment is denominated a conversion, few will believe that Wesley was altogether unconverted before. This critical change produced others. He gradually dropped his asceticism, his doctrine of apostolic succession, and a good deal also of his ecclesiastical assumption and his priestly exclusiveness.

Before proceeding further let Wesley speak for himself on the leading topics of his theology. "How must a man be *born again*?" he inquires. In reply he gives no minute philosophical account of the manner, saying we are not to expect anything of the kind; that it is with the New Birth as with the blowing of the wind. "It is that great change which God works in the soul, when He brings it into life; when the love of the world is changed into the love of God; pride into humility; passion into meekness; hatred, envy, malice, into a sincere, tender, disinterested love for all mankind. In a word, it is that change, whereby the earthly, sensual, devilish mind is turned into the mind which was in Christ Jesus." Wesley insists on the necessity of the change in order to holiness, to heaven, and to present happiness; and from this, he says, it follows that Baptism is not the New Birth, it does not always accompany it, and it is not the same thing as sanctification.* Another distinctive feature in his teaching is

* Wesley's "Sermons," XVIII., XXI.

the doctrine of *Assurance*. The keynote was struck whilst he remained at Oxford. "If we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, which He will not do unless we are regenerate, surely we must be sensible of it." "That we can never be so certain of the pardon of our sins as to be assured they will never rise up against us, I firmly believe. We know that they will infallibly do so, if we apostatize; and I am not satisfied what evidence there can be of our final perseverance till we have finished our course. But I am persuaded we may know if we are *now* in a state of salvation, since that is expressly promised in the Holy Scriptures, to our sincere endeavours, and we are surely able to judge of our own sincerity."* The belief of the doctrine of assurance led in after life to his belief in the *Witness of the Spirit*. "I observed many years ago," he says, "that it is hard to find words in the language of men to explain the deep things of God. Indeed, there are none which will adequately express what the Spirit of God works in His children. But perhaps, one might say (desiring any who are taught of God to correct, soften, or strengthen the expression) by the testimony of the Spirit I mean, an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God, that Jesus Christ has loved me and given Himself for me; and that my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God. After twenty years' further consideration, I see no cause to retract any part of this."† The doctrine of *Christian Perfection* is another mark of Wesley's theology. He defined it as meaning not perfection in knowledge,—not freedom from error, mis-

* Moore's "Wesley," II. 1, 2.

† Wesley's "Sermons," X. and XI., I. 100.

take or infirmity ; he said, it is being made perfect in love ; and he dwelt much upon the words of St. John, that those who are born of God cannot commit sin. Most of Wesley's teaching on this point turns upon his interpretation of St. John's words ; and that teaching cannot be fully understood without a careful perusal of all Wesley's writings on the subject.

Wesley's sermons exhibit his theology. He was strongly anti-Calvinistic, especially in later days. He opposed the doctrines of predestination and perseverance, as taught by Puritans of the Commonwealth ; but notwithstanding, like John Goodwin, he had much spiritual feeling of the Puritan cast, which broke out in spite of all his antagonism to many points in Puritan theology. His preaching, occasionally doctrinal, was more frequently experimental and practical, but whatever the theme, the preacher's method was strictly logical. What would be called impassioned declamation was by no means frequent, though in most of his published sermons may be found penetrating appeals and earnest expostulations. There is little imagination in his addresses ; a poetical element is wanting ; the style is uniformly plain, compressed, and cogent ; but we ever feel it to be sharp-edged, making deep incisions. Many will think that the founder of Methodism attached too great importance to certain phases of feeling ; that he confounded the faith by which we are saved, with the peace, the hope, and the joy arising from that faith ; that the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit, Methodistically understood, is based upon an interpretation of St. Paul's language to which critical and other objections may be fairly made ; and that incautious expressions on the subject are sometimes used in Wesley's writings ; but this subject, if pursued,

would lead to theological discussion unsuited to the historical work on which I am now engaged. But this is visible at a glance, that under his characteristic teaching there lay faith in the presence and power of the Spirit of God amongst the children of men. To many orthodox Divines of the last century, as appears from their sermons, the work of the Spirit on the human soul was simply historical, a thing of the past. To see it, they went back to the day of Pentecost, to the apostolic age, to the writings of St. Paul and St. John. The Spirit's work was only in the Bible. They saw little, if anything more. Wesley believed that the Spirit of God did not withdraw and leave the Church for seventeen hundred years entirely to a Divine book, and to human reason. He believed that the Comforter was sent to "*abide for ever*;" that He was giving light and life to the sons of Adam in the eighteenth century as in the first. Quakers believed this, and proclaimed it; the first Methodist did it on a larger scale, and more effectually. It is scarcely possible to estimate the power of Wesley's ministry in this respect.

Epworth is in the Isle of Axholme amidst Lincolnshire fens, yet it lies on the slope of rising ground, the upper end of which is crowned by the parish church, and from the steeple, on a clear day, both Sheffield and Lincoln may be seen. The west side of the churchyard commands a pleasant view of homesteads, cottages, and clumps of trees, and at the east end, close under a southern window of the chancel, is the grave of Samuel Wesley, the famous rector. Hither came his son John, just before the Midsummer of 1742. It was many years since he had visited his birth-place, but he was soon recognized by an old servant; and on Sunday morning he called on the curate and offered to assist

him in the service. The curate declined the Methodist's assistance, and in the afternoon, Wesley attended as a hearer, when he was doomed to listen to some offensive remarks on the mischiefs of enthusiasm. The application of such remarks, with such a person in the congregation, was obvious enough. As the people, who had hoped to hear their old rector's son, were pouring out of the church, a notice was given by one John Taylor, standing at the door: "Mr. Wesley, not being permitted to preach in the church, designs to preach here at six o'clock." At six o'clock the picturesque churchyard was filled with a multitude from the neighbourhood, when Wesley, standing on his father's tombstone, took for his text, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It was because he could not preach in the church, that he preached in the open air. He loved the parish temples of England. He loved in particular that of Epworth, with its old grey tower and its rustic interior, where he had worshipped as a boy and seen his father in the pulpit. Hence he was forced into a position like that which in after life he habitually assumed, and having preached once at Epworth, outside the building, he determined to repeat this throughout the week. For seven successive evenings after the first, the inhabitants of the town and adjacent villages gathered about the familiar hillocks and gravestones, and the Methodist preacher was each evening at his post. "By grace are ye saved through faith"—"To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness"—"God be merciful to me a sinner"—"Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba,

Father"—Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones, and the Sermon on the Mount—these were the texts and subjects on which he preached on those June evenings, as the sun went down over the tops of the houses, and the gathering shadows made the solemn stillness of those never-to-be-forgotten hours still more solemn. That week's work will live in the history of the Church in England as long as the world lasts. Every day was filled up with religious labours. Round about the neighbourhood Wesley went, revisiting the scenes of his boyhood, and preaching everywhere. Some of his hearers were carried off in waggon loads to a Justice of the Peace. "What have they done?" asked his worship. "Why they pretend to be better than other people; and, besides, they pray from morning to night." "But have they done nothing beside?" "Yes, sir," exclaimed an old man; "An't please your worship they have *convarted* my wife. Till she went among them, she had such a tongue, and now she is as quiet as a lamb." "Carry them back," replied the Justice, "and let them convert all the scolds in the town." On the Saturday night, as the people were wending their way out of the churchyard, Wesley observing a gentleman who had not attended public worship for thirty years, asked him, "Sir, are you a sinner?" He replied "with a deep and broken voice, 'sinner enough,' and continued staring upwards till his wife and a servant or two, who were all in tears, put him into his chaise and carried him home." With the impression made by these sermons Wesley was the more satisfied, because he considered that it was the result, not simply of what was said at the time, but of earlier appeals made by his father and himself years before—apparently all in vain. Much in the story of

that week was significant, beyond the open-air preaching, and the incessant daily labour. There were outbursts of excitement in the churchyard typical of what often occurred under Wesley's ministry. "Several dropped down as dead," and among the rest such a cry was heard of "sinners groaning for the righteousness of faith as almost drowned the preacher's voice." And perhaps the very position of the preacher at the time was not without its significance. "He took his stand upon his father's tomb," says a catholic-spirited Episcopalian, "on the venerable and ancestral traditions of the country and the Church. That was the stand from which he addressed the world; it was not from the points of disagreement, but from the points of agreement with them in the Christian religion, that he produced those great effects which have never since died out in English Christendom."*

Wesley's illustrious coadjutor, George Whitefield, bears away the palm from all rivals in pulpit oratory. Perhaps no man of any age in the world's history was exactly like him. Certainly he and Wesley did together a work such as had never been done before. Bunyan and Baxter had gathered immense congregations. The Reformers at St. Paul's Cross had seen London citizens swarming like bees round the stone pulpit. Luther had filled the churches of Wittenberg, and other cities in Saxony; Tauler at Strasburg, Bernard in many a cathedral, had attracted multitudes. The preachers of Greek Christendom had produced wonderful effects in Antioch and Constantinople; but Wesley and Whitefield were the first great preachers in both hemispheres of this terrestrial globe. White-

* Dean Stanley's Speech at the unveiling of the Wesley Monument in Westminster Abbey.

field was as popular in America as in England. He crossed the Atlantic seven times, roused from torpor, there as well as here, Churches of all denominations, and by his own voice, so far as human instrumentality was concerned, converted thousands on thousands from the error of their ways. No one man before him had ever come into immediate contact with so many minds ; no one voice had ever rung in so many ears ; no one ministry had ever touched so many hearts. The *depth* of the impression produced is as wonderful as its *extent*. People were not merely interested, persuaded, convinced, but they were quickened with a new kind of life. Whatever theory of explanation be adopted, whether evangelical or rationalistic, here were masses on masses from time to time penetrated, and changed in character and conduct. Say that it was mere excitement ; still the fact remains, that no such an excitement by preaching had ever in this country been produced before.

Whitefield, like Wesley, underwent a great change of religious experience after his ordination ; he was converted, he said, and the story of his spiritual life must be pondered by any one who would understand the nature of his ministry. Thus he describes his conversion : " About the end of the seventh week, after having undergone innumerable buffetings of Satan, and many months' inexpressible trials, by night and day, under the spirit of bondage ; God was pleased at length to remove the heavy load—to enable me to lay hold of His dear Son by a living faith, and, by giving me the spirit of adoption, to seal me, as I humbly hope, even to the day of everlasting adoption. But oh, with what joy—joy unspeakable, even joy that was full of and big with glory, was my soul filled when the

weight of sin went off, and an abiding sense of the pardoning love of God, and a full assurance of faith broke in upon my disconsolate soul. At first my joys were like a spring tide ; and, as it were, overflowed the banks. So when I would, I could not avoid singing of psalms almost aloud : afterwards they became more settled, and, blessed be God, saving a few casual intervals, have abode and increased in my soul ever since."

The difference between Wesley and Whitefield is here apparent. Whitefield was not so self-critical as his friend. He did not bring himself before so severe a tribunal. There was in him less of judicial scrutiny ; more of vehement passion. The two characters are marked throughout, distinguishing each life and each ministry from that of the other. Whitefield was more impulsive, more demonstrative than Wesley. Both excited feelings in the minds of vast multitudes, Wesley, with perfect control over himself, was calm and quiet amidst the storm he roused ; Whitefield, a subject of the excitement he produced, was borne away with his hearers in one flood of religious emotion.

Whitefield preceded Wesley as a field preacher ; and he does not seem to have felt any reluctance to this mode of usefulness. It seems to have accorded with his taste.

Stinchcombe Hill in Gloucestershire commands a magnificent panorama. To the west and north is the broad Severn. Beyond spreads the Forest of Dean, and on the south are the blue Welsh mountains. Nearer, on the left bank, there lie concealed the grey town and castle of Berkeley. On the east is the long range of Cotswold hills. On the landscape may be mapped out seven counties, and a keen eye may pick

out amidst woods and villages no less than thirty steeples. In the middle of the last century, the hill was alive with crowds of people. They came from Berkeley, Dursley, Wotton-under-Edge, Minchinhampton, Tetbury, and places more remote. There were labouring men of all sorts, old and young, in rustic guise, with wives and daughters, and a sprinkling of the better sort of folks, in beaver hats and silken hoods. Hundreds and thousands came to hear Whitefield preach. There he was, mounted on a horseblock, with hands lifted up to heaven. He proclaimed to the multitude the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, and insisted on the necessity of the new birth. He declared what he believed, in alternate bursts of the terrific and the tender, which moved the audience like tree-tops in the wind. His doctrine sounded strange to some; and to all, the discourse seemed amazingly different from what they had heard the previous Sunday, in the Parish Church or the Presbyterian Meeting-house. What took place on Stinchcombe Hill had its counterparts in many other places.

Whitefield was no master of logic, nor did he possess the faculty of imagination in any high degree. He had a great deal of ready power. Quick and agile in his mental movements, ready of utterance, never "stumbling on a word," apt and dexterous in turns of thought, expert in the use of interrogatories, exclamations, and apostrophes, capable of packing up his ideas in short unmistakable sentences, and endowed with wonderful histrionic power, he had qualities which would have made him a great actor. Besides, he scrupled not at times to indulge in humour. "Ay sure," said an aged listener, "he was a jolly brave man; and what a look he had when he put out his

hand thus," suiting the action to the word, "to rebuke a disturber as tried to stop him under the pear-tree. The man had been threatening and noisy—but he could not stand the look. Off he rode; and Whitefield said, 'There he goes, empty barrels make most din.'"

Whitefield was an innovator, and excited imitation. Others kindled lamps at his torch, his own he lighted himself. The habits of ministers, the inconsistency of many, the apathy of more, aroused an indignation, which in his early days he was not slow to express. Often, as might be expected in a man of impulsive temperament, there was a lack of discrimination in his censures; he could be very uncharitable, and the bolts of his anger flew thick and fast. This habit of criticizing others gave spice to his sermons, which heightened their flavour to the taste of many, since there are always people to whom fault-finding oratory is exceedingly delightful. Whitefield had his infirmities, and, as in the case of other popular men, even infirmities contributed to influence and renown; but this should be mentioned, that he invited criticism from his friends, and thankfully accepted a faithful communication from Dr. Doddridge.

Methodist preaching in the open air offended the advocates of Church order. Other irregularities provoked displeasure. John Wesley and his brother Charles once waited upon Gibson, Bishop of London, to explain their conduct and to conciliate his favour. He received them kindly; and when they pressed upon him a certain matter, no other than the rebaptism of Dissenters, indicating how much of High Church feeling they still retained,—when they urged that silent permission in other cases of irregularity had been taken for authority, and that his Lordship allowed it to be so,

he said, "It is one thing to connive, and another to approve; I have power to inhibit you." "Does your Lordship exert that power? Do you now inhibit me?" The rejoinder implied more than it expressed, "Why will you press matters to an extreme?" On another occasion Charles Wesley says, "He showed us great affection, and cautioned us to give no more umbrage than was necessary for our own defence; to forbear exceptionable phrases, and to keep to the doctrines of the Church." The writer adds, "We told him we expected persecution, and would abide by the Church till her Articles and Homilies were repealed. He assured us he knew of no design in the governors of the Church to innovate, neither should there be any innovation while he lived." Gibson afterwards showed himself less friendly towards Methodists, for he condemned the system in a pastoral letter, and in one of his episcopal charges. But Lavington, Bishop of Exeter, in his "Methodists and Papists compared," published in 1749, went far beyond his brother of London. He called the followers of Wesley "a dangerous and presumptuous sect, animated with an enthusiastic and fanatical spirit," and talked of their "sanctified singularities and low fooleries." The preachers were strolling mendicants, "the windmill was in all their heads." This was not all. Violence was added to abuse and scorn. The Methodists were not treated as the Puritans and early Nonconformists had been. Persecution did not proceed from ecclesiastical courts, as in the reigns of the first two Stuarts, nor from Parliamentary Acts, as under Charles II. and James II.; sometimes, however, the enmity of magistrates, and sometimes the opposition of the Clergy, but more frequently the violence of angry multitudes, in-

flicted upon the followers of the two great revivalists immense suffering. They were mobbed, hooted, pelted, knocked down, and nearly killed. Stories of Wesleyan confessorship are very numerous. Town after town is mentioned as the scene of riotous and cruel conduct ; Wednesbury is particularly noticeable, where preachers were held under water till they were almost drowned, and women were treated in such a way that they never recovered. Houses were attacked, goods were destroyed, and in the place are still preserved fragments of furniture smashed by the rabble. Times changed before Wesley's death ; after having in his first visit to Cornwall narrowly escaped with life, his last visit to that part of England was a perfect ovation.

The most furious enemies of Methodism were either men of no religion at all, or men whose religion must have been no less fanatical than that of the worst and weakest of their victims. Clerical magistrates and unmagisterial clergymen made themselves conspicuous in this respect, and the violence of Dissenters can no more be concealed than the violence of Churchmen. Instances occur, but they are rare, of the former assailing open-air preachers. Generally, however, if they had any animosity, it was manifested in other ways. Non-conformists with doctrinal views opposed to those of the Wesleys, might conscientiously condemn what they held to be erroneous ; probably, in some cases, they were tempted to impugn the motives of the revivalists, and to circulate tales of scandal. Sober London ministers disliked street preaching. The trustees of Mr. Coward wrote to Dr. Doddridge so as to show that they disapproved of his inviting Whitefield to occupy his pulpit. Great fear of fanaticism existed amongst certain sober-minded men in the metropolis ; also great

fear of Arminianism on the part of zealous Calvinists throughout the country. But a few eminent Nonconformists hailed the warm-hearted evangelists as helpers and examples, as harbingers of coming good, the heralds of "a new ministration of Christianity."

In connection with Methodism were certain forms of excitement, which require a passing notice. People sunk into convulsions, drops of sweat ran down the face, all the bones of the body shook, one person after another fell to the earth as if thunderstruck. Sometimes it took two or three men to hold one in a state of paroxysm. It is remarkable that such phenomena chiefly attended the preaching of John Wesley. They occurred in connection with the sermons of George Whitefield, on an occasion when he was labouring with his friend at Bristol; but not before nor afterwards, as it would seem. It is singular that the less impassioned oratory of Wesley was for a while commonly followed by physical disturbances which did not appear after the discourses of Whitefield. Whitefield did not approve of such manifestations, nor did Charles Wesley. Indeed, by his decided opposition, the latter effectually overcame them. These facts are puzzling. They go beyond what we read of as taking place on the day of Pentecost. They do not resemble demoniacal possessions, when two distinct personalities, the human and the satanic, seemed at strife in the same soul. Cries of awakened sinners, under Wesley's appeals, expressed their own consciousness, not the acts of another struggling within them. The phenomena appear to belong to a class of experiences coming within the range of causes really natural, though never explained. Medical authorities speak of "hysteria, regular and irregular;" "of morbid conditions of the emotional

nature, seeking for outlets ;" and of "pent-up forces producing paroxysmal fits." These expressions do not afford much help, but they point to mysteries in the constitution of man. Physiologists have not explored all, or nearly all, which that manifold constitution contains ; and, as in other realms of nature, so doubtless in this, occult powers are waiting to be discovered.

Serious differences arose, about 1740, between the two leaders, respecting doctrinal questions. Whitefield could not agree with Wesley in his views of Christian perfection. Wesley could not agree with Whitefield in his views of Divine predestination. Each of them failed to look at truth from the same standpoint as that occupied by the other ; nor did either avoid what is incident to all theological controversy, the error and injustice of attributing to an opponent consequences which, however apparently logical, that opponent distinctly disavows. It is enough to remark, that Whitefield, at first, was loath to enter into controversy with his friend ; that Wesley first published on the subject of Calvinism ; that Whitefield then retaliated on Wesley the charge of false doctrine, in a very provoking style ; that the dispute became complicated by the interference of other people ; and that Whitefield first made public the fact of Wesley's deciding to publish, in consequence of drawing a lot, and of his also having put to the same test another and a personal question. These were private transactions which Whitefield had no business to proclaim to the world ; and when he saw his error he made an ample apology. Happily, after a long separation, during which the two revivalists pursued different paths of action, they were reconciled, and treated each other as friends.

Methodism, in its original form, assumed no attitude of opposition to the Church, on the contrary, the Wesleys professed themselves its servants and sons ; as for Charles, he remained much more completely than his brother John in communion with the Establishment to the end of his days. Methodism, as an organization outside the National Church, was the result of circumstances more than of design ; its development rose out of no fixed plan, but rather resembled the growth of the English Constitution.

A superficial likeness between the Society of John Wesley, and the Society of Ignatius Loyola, has laid hold on the imaginations of some, so as to mislead their judgment. The founder of Methodism, like the author of Jesuitism, was a man of rare administrative ability, and the extent, stability, and permanence of the system rival those of the Roman institute ; the order and regularity of proceedings in the one case may be compared with the steady methodical action of the other. There the likeness stops ; divergences branch into contrasts. The two men were dissimilar save in gifts of personal influence and social organization. In character Wesley resembled Bernard more than Loyola. What has been said about the origin of Methodism in Wesley's mind, and the discipline of circumstances leading to unanticipated consequences, presents a story opposed to that of Jesuitism, which began with rearing a new order, according to a definite plan framed from the beginning. The theory that Wesley determined on an ambitious scheme for rivaling other denominations is now exploded : that Ignatius Loyola designed to create a new institution is an indisputable fact. As to aims, Methodism sprung from a simple desire to save souls, however,

in the estimation of some of its critics, it may have involved fanaticism. It pointed to no political ends, it contemplated no intrigues for the attainment of social influence, it embraced no schemes of literary and scientific culture: such objects were compassed and prominently kept in view by the Jesuit Fathers. As to principles, Methodist doctrine is as much opposed to that of Loyola, as Luther's doctrine is to that of Rome; and Methodist discipline, whatever the defects charged upon it, is thoroughly free from intolerance with regard to other denominations, its constant maxim having been, "the friend of all, and the enemy of none."

In describing the organization of Methodism, it is difficult to say what was the precise date of its origin. Wesley began with no fixed theory. The theory of Methodism has grown out of its practice. He spoke of meetings at Oxford in 1729; of meetings in his own house at Savannah, 1736; of meetings in Fetter Lane in 1738; and of the United Society in 1739, as the beginnings of Methodism. Hence he must himself have thought that the planting of the vineyard extended over at least ten years. It is plain that certain arrangements can be traced back to those of the United Brethren. "*Bands*," by which are meant small gatherings of persons, described "as walking in the light of God," appear among the earliest features of the body; and this close and intimate kind of friendship had been previously cultivated at Fetter Lane. "*Love Feasts*," in imitation of the Agapæ, in their original simplicity, are very noticeable in the early stages of Wesleyanism, as they are in the early history of Zinzendorf's Brotherhood. Added to these, there were two religious services which seem to be original.

The "*Watch Night*" and the "*Covenant Meeting*," the first usually beginning at eventide with a sermon, and continued by singing, exhortation, and prayers until the midnight hour; the second, a solemn engagement made at a meeting of members, to serve God with their whole heart and soul.

The first Methodist chapel built was at Bristol in 1739; the second, the Foundry, Moorfields, London, in the same year. Lay preaching gradually arose. The earliest step is seen in the appointment by Wesley of persons engaged in secular business, to read and expound the Scriptures, without any exercise of clerical functions, to which he was decidedly averse. Then followed the separation of such agents from worldly callings, with the employment of their whole time in religious service. Thomas Maxfield was of this description, and during one of Wesley's absences from London he began to preach. "Thomas Maxfield," said John Wesley to his mother, "has turned preacher, I find." He did not like it. "Take care what you do with respect to that young man," she replied, "for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are." Such words from a High Churchwoman startled her son, and he reluctantly, very reluctantly, sanctioned lay preaching.

The main characteristic peculiarities of the organization are found in the Class, the Conference, and the Circuit. Church of England Societies at the close of the seventeenth century might appear, at first sight, precursors of the *Class*; but on closer inspection a radical difference may be detected. Admission to the Church by *baptism* lay at the basis of the earlier Societies; but admission to Class by the experience of *conversion*, or by the desire of such an experience,

formed the corner-stone of Wesleyanism. "The birthday of a Christian was already shifted from his baptism to his conversion, and in that change the partition line of two great systems is crossed." The Class would somewhat resemble the Oxford private gatherings; in them, like the earlier Societies, the leaders insisted on baptism as the entrance gate. The Moravians, indeed, had their Band Meetings, but Classes differed from them; and among Moravians, Band Meetings merged into Classes. Classes were composed of Methodist converts meeting together under the presidency of a lay leader, who prayed with them, asked questions, and, according to the answers, added advice to each individual. At first the leader visited each person at home, but that practice being found inconvenient, the persons under his charge were gathered into a company, required to meet in one particular place. Classes were regarded by the founder as "the sinews of his Societies." He was a practical man, and soon added a practical measure. "I was talking with several of the Society in Bristol (15th February, 1742) concerning the means of paying the debts there, when one stood up and said, 'Let every member of the Society give a penny a week, till all are paid.' Another answered, 'But many of them are poor, and cannot afford to do it.' 'Then,' said he, 'put eleven of the poorest with me; and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself. And each of you call on eleven of your neighbours weekly; receive what they give, and make up what is wanting.' It was done."*

The Conference is another element of the system. "In 1744, I wrote," says Wesley, "to several clergy-

* Smith's "History of Wesleyan Methodism," I. 188.

men, and to all who then served me as sons in the gospel, desiring them to meet me in London, and to give me their advice concerning the best method of carrying on the work of God." That was the first conference that ever was held, and amongst those who obeyed the summons, were his brother Charles, and a beneficed minister from the Isle of Man. Clerical assistance John Wesley highly valued, and procured it whenever he was able; but on this occasion he had mainly to depend on four lay preachers, including Thomas Maxfield. The business proposed and decided was, in this case, and in all subsequent ones, reported in the form of question and answer. In 1745, ecclesiastical principles came under discussion—the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, and the Independent systems were reviewed, in by no means an antagonistic spirit, but rather so as to indicate a recognition in each, of something true, good, and wise. In 1747, the National Church is called "a merely political institution." In 1753 it was determined that Predestinarian preachers should no longer occupy the pulpits of the Society. In 1755 it was pronounced inexpedient to leave the Established Church; and in 1756 Wesley and his brother solemnly resolved never to separate from it.

The Circuit does not appear until after two Conferences had been held. The first record of such an arrangement comes before us in the minutes of 1746. Circuits were filled by lay preachers, called *Itincrants*, who devoted their whole time to the ministry, and received in return a scanty allowance. They were appointed at Conference meetings, and changed from place to place after a period of one or two years. With them were associated other laymen, who continued to obtain a livelihood by secular employment,

while they devoted what time they could to preaching and other spiritual work. They were designated *Local Preachers*, because they were limited to certain spots. Each Itinerant was to have a horse and a pair of saddle-bags, containing a Bible, a hymn-book, and a limited wardrobe. Neatness in dress was enjoined as a duty: in this respect they were required to imitate their founder, who was the opposite of a sloven, and used to say, "Cleanliness is next to godliness." Their well-brushed coats were often threadbare; and the elder travellers were wont to put on large wigs and three-cornered hats, after the professional fashion of the age, so as to be recognized wherever they went. From Monday to Saturday, from sunrise to sundown, they were on the move, scouring hill and dale, the broad turnpike, and the narrow lane. Sometimes they were hissed and hooted at as they crossed a village green; sometimes they were welcomed in the farmer's homestead as messengers of mercy. Where a Methodist chapel existed they occupied it; but more frequently in early days they had to be satisfied with a horse-block as a pulpit in the open air, or with an empty barn, a good-sized kitchen, or the largest room in a labourer's cottage.

At first the Circuits had no links of connection with one another, or with any central point. At the Conference in 1749, the defect was supplied. The Society in London came to be regarded as the Mother Church, and information had to be sent up to the officers there, of what went on in other localities. Annual collections were appointed for assistance to needy congregations, and a superintendent was placed over Circuits, to conduct the general administration of affairs. These superintendents were denominated "*assistants*," and

co-operated with Wesley, who appears as superintendent in chief of the London circuit. Soon afterwards stewards were appointed, a class of officers who paid the expenses of travelling preachers, and otherwise looked after their pecuniary support. Some other developments followed, to be noticed hereafter. It was by slow elaboration from point to point that the machinery of the Connection came to be constructed; one part was made to harmonize with another, according to that inventive skill which distinguished the father of the whole fellowship.

It was no mere machine, but a living organism that he brought into existence. Its healthy exercise needed a current of spiritual emotion; and what the blood is to the human frame, hymnology has been to Wesleyanism, a source of life and power. Almost all the Wesleys were able to think in verse, but in the poetic gift Charles rose above the rest. The number of his hymns is truly amazing, for they amount altogether to seven thousand.* But this is small praise; indeed, his most ardent admirers must allow he wrote too much. Yet, with all their imperfections, they are unrivalled. There are hymns of smoother versification and pervaded by a serener spirit—more suited to Anglo-Catholics, and perhaps to sedate Nonconformists; but for light and life, force and fire, no compositions can compare with those of the Methodist poets. They bear distinctly a character of their own, and reflect the excitement out of which they rose. Perhaps at times Isaac Watts may have surpassed them in grandeur of conception, and Philip Doddridge in tenderness of sentiment; but beyond anything in

* They have been collected and carefully edited in thirteen volumes, by Dr. Osborn.

either, there are in Charles Wesley's hymns tones of conflict and victory which resemble the voice of a trumpet, and strains of praise like the sound of many waters. The earliest hymns, published in 1739, were mostly accommodations from other English authors, or translations from German bards. In 1740 appeared a second and similar collection. In 1741 followed other volumes, in one of which a number of pieces are taken from Watts; and another, containing hymns on "God's Everlasting Love," assumes a polemical aspect in reference to the tenets of Calvinism. In 1742 we have "Hymns and Sacred Poems," including the matchless lyric of "Jacob Wrestling with the Angel." If some compositions rose out of controversy, others sprung out of persecution. Hymns for times of trouble were published in 1744, some of them plaintive and patient, others ringing with trumpet-notes of defiance and victory. It is easy to imagine a band of Methodists, threatened by the rabble, taking up the hymn, appointed "to be sung in a tumult," which begins with these triumphant lines—

"Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim,
And publish abroad His wonderful Name :
The name all-victorious of Jesus extol ;
His Kingdom is glorious, and rules over all."

The sentiment excels the versification; and we recognize in it an outburst of faith and fortitude which will bear favourable comparison with the choral songs of the Athanasians, as they marched through the streets of Constantinople confessing their trust in the Divine Redeemer.

Of funeral hymns there are a first, a second, and a third series. "In deaths oft," the Wesleys and their companions realized, as few have done, the nearness of

the eternal world, and its mysteries of light and glory. When friends dropped off, they followed them to the grave, not with mourning, lamentation, and woe, but in the full assurance of hope. The second Funeral hymn breathes an ecstatic joy in the midst of tribulation, rarely equalled, never surpassed—

“ Rejoice for a brother deceased,
Our loss is his infinite gain ;
A soul out of prison released,
And freed from its bodily chain ;
With songs let us follow his flight,
And mount with his spirit above,
Escaped to the mansions of light,
And lodged in the *Eden* of love.”

The history of Methodist hymnology shows any one who reads it what a mighty inspiration it was to the body at the beginning, and has been ever since. Strains full of life became familiar to the members as household words, and were sung in the little chapel, on the hill-side, amidst the crowded street, by the ingle nook of the cottager, by the bedside of the dying, in the funeral procession, and on the brink of the grave. Perhaps no other Church has ever lived and moved and had its being in such an atmosphere of sacred song.*

* Wesley's "Works," Tyerman's "Lives of Wesley and Whitefield," Southey's "Life of Wesley," "Lives of Early Methodist Preachers," and especially Smith's "History of Methodism," are the principal authorities for what is said in this and other chapters respecting Methodism ; also Moore, Watson, and several modern authors have been consulted, and traditions current in my young days have been employed.

CHAPTER VI.

GEORGE II. died on the 25th of October, 1760, and was buried at Westminster on the 11th of November. He expressed a wish that his own remains and those of his Queen should be interred together; consequently the two coffins were placed in a single sarcophagus, their sides being withdrawn, and the ashes commingled. Secker, as Archbishop of Canterbury, was present at the funeral, and he relates, "I was at several Committees of Council in relation to it, but nothing passed there worth writing here. I did not put on weepers with my other mourning, and few of the Bishops and other Clergy did. I went to the great door of Westminster Hall in my coach, which was allowed to stay there all the time. They who walked first in the procession filled the stalls before they who walked last came, so that I and the Lord Keeper and Lord Privy Seal, and others, stood for some time in the middle of the choir; but afterwards we went to a bench in the north-east corner, and stayed there."

This passage, with some additions, is found in a MS. volume preserved at Lambeth in the handwriting of Secker, who also, in the same document, supplies a minute account of certain incidents connected with the accession of George III. On Monday, the 27th of October, he conversed with his Majesty respecting

needful alterations in the Prayer for the Royal Family. "The King sent for me," he says, "into a room, where he was alone, and told me that as the Royal Family was numerous, and he was unwilling to put in any of his brothers and leave out his uncle, and many names might hereafter make confusion, he thought it would be best to insert only the Princess Dowager of Wales in particular. I assented to it; and then I took the opportunity of assuring him of my duty and best services. He said very graciously, that he had no doubt on that head, and that I was one of his oldest acquaintance, having baptized him on the day he was born, after once doubting whether he was alive, as Mrs. Kennon, the mid-wife, had often told him." Secker, it may be added, not only baptized, but also confirmed the young prince; and after the accession he officiated at the marriage of the King with the Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg. On Sunday, November 2nd, the Archbishop writes: "The King hoped the proclamation against vice and profaneness would be regarded, and have a good effect. I answered, that such proclamations had been apt to be considered as matters of course, but that his example, I was persuaded, would give life and vigour to this. He replied that he thought it was his principal duty to encourage and support religion and virtue. I applauded this sentiment in few words highly, and mentioned it afterwards in conversation as his."

The Primate carefully preserved numerous letters and notes relating to the Coronation of George III., and amongst them occurs the following statement relating to a circumstance which has been differently represented:* "At the Communion the King asked

* Stanley's "Hist. Memorials of Westminster Abbey," 101.

me if he should not take off his crown. I said the Office did not mention it. He asked if it would not be more suitable to such an act of religion. I said, 'Yes; but the Queen's crown could not be taken off easily,'" and the Archbishop remarks a few sentences before: "When I had put on the crown, the ladies pinned it to the Queen's head-dress or hair. The King then asked, 'What must be done?' I said, 'As ladies' heads are used to be covered, it would not be regarded.' He put off his crown immediately; and all the Peers that saw it took off their coronets. Archbishop Wake's MS. directs both the King and Queen to take off their crowns. His printed form doth not."

Whatever might be the political faults of George III., of his personal virtues, and the sincerity of his religious faith, there can be no doubt. Traditions of his devoutness still linger amongst the stories of old times at Windsor; and they include anecdotes of his sympathy with religious people of different denominations. He spoke with respect of the worthy pastor of an Independent Church in the town; was very considerate in allowing Nonconformist servants in the household ample opportunities for devotional services; and it is related that once passing by a Methodist meeting-house surrounded by a tumultuous rabble, he said, "The Methodists are a quiet, good kind of people, and will disturb nobody; and if I learn that any persons in my employment disturb them, they shall be immediately dismissed."

After the accession of George III., the Dissenting Ministers of the three denominations in London, according to established custom, had an audience with his Majesty, and presented a loyal Address of the usual type, which was graciously acknowledged.

In the first year of George III. several Bishops died : Hoadly, of Winchester ; Sherlock, of London ; Gilbert, of York ; this occasioned several changes in the Episcopal Bench ; Drummond, as Archbishop of York ; Thomas, as Bishop of Salisbury ; Yonge, as Bishop of Norwich ; and Green, as Bishop of Lincoln, kissed the Royal hand on the same day. All this happened before the coronation ; and Newton, as Bishop of Bristol, passed through the ceremony soon afterwards. The frank autobiography of the last Prelate takes us behind the scenes. After an offer of the Deanery of Westminster, with the Bishopric of Rochester—when, as he says himself, “the Bishop of Bristol did not think it worth his while to make the exchange, having something better in view”—Mr. Grenville endeavoured to obtain for him, in 1764, the See of London, on the decease of Dr. Osbaldeston. The Duke of Bedford joined in the recommendation ; but his Majesty, who “was very gracious in his answers, and was pleased to say many kind things of the Bishop of Bristol,” was “unluckily, somehow or other, partly engaged, and had given some kind of promise for Bishop Terrick, in Lord Bute’s administration, which he thought himself now obliged to fulfil.” This was not the only time, Newton tells us, with the air of a disappointed man, that Terrick stood in his way. When the Primate of Ireland was thought to be dying, in 1764, Mr. Grenville “sounded a particular friend of the Bishop of Bristol, to know whether the Primacy would be agreeable to him.” After the Archbishop was gone, Grenville sent for Newton and assured him he could readily obtain for him the Royal appointment to the vacant see. But the Bishop, “having fully considered the matter before in all points of view, declined the offer

with all possible gratitude, assigning his reasons for so doing, and expressing how much happier he should be with a translation to a Bishopric in England, not naming any one in particular." It is curious to learn how the Minister classified the Sees. They were of two kinds—"Bishoprics of business, for men of abilities and learning; and Bishoprics of ease, for men of family and fashion." Of the former he reckoned Canterbury, York, London, and Ely on account of its connection with Cambridge; of the latter, Durham, Winchester, Salisbury, and Worcester. But the ambitious Bishop lost his chance of further preferment when Grenville resigned office in 1765.*

In 1768, the Primate Secker ended his days. It is said that he "was never acceptable nor agreeable at Court, nor ever had due weight and influence there." The sway of appointments, once to a large extent in the hands of the Primate, had by degrees been engrossed by the Ministers of State, and "Bishops were regarded as little better than ciphers, even in their own churches." Twenty old Royal chaplains were discarded, and as many new ones appointed, without the privity of his Grace; and from Court papers in Lambeth Library it appears that members of the Royal family did not scruple to write to him in recommendation of clergymen whom they wished to serve. On the Primate's decease, Newton calculated that Terrick would be promoted to Canterbury, and he hoped he should himself be raised to the Metropolitan See; but his hopes were dashed to the ground, "*Diis aliter visum*," he despondingly exclaimed, "The higher powers made a different arrangement."†

* "*Life of Dr. Thomas Newton*," 112-157.

† *Ibid.*, 163.

Cornwallis, Bishop of Lichfield and Dean of St. Paul's, succeeded Secker ; and in noticing his career, the Countess of Huntingdon crosses our path. In the latter half of the eighteenth century she attained the zenith of her influence, and during the first ten years of that period, as well as before, through the services of Whitefield, who acted as her chaplain, she produced a striking effect upon the minds of many noble personages. In her town house, crowds of titled people filled the drawing-room, to hear the much-talked-of preacher. There sat Lord Chesterfield, who, after listening to an eloquent sermon, returned thanks with characteristic courtliness ; and there, too, Lord Bolingbroke might be seen and heard, inviting the orator to visit him, and endeavouring "to pass from infidelity to Calvinism if he could." * A centre of religious power in the circles of fashionable life, the Countess watched the conduct of Prelates, being much concerned at what she heard respecting entertainments at the archiepiscopal palace ; for Mrs. Cornwallis created great scandal by her balls and her routs, and by the splendour of her equipage. Lady Huntingdon aimed at putting an end to all this, which had become the talk of the town ; and for that purpose she waited on his Grace. He was highly offended at this interference, and his wife went so far as to ridicule her Ladyship in conversation with some fashionable friends. The Countess, hearing she had been called a hypocrite by Mrs. Cornwallis, sought an interview with the King, who after noticing what had been said of the Archbishop, remarked, "I have been told so many odd stories of your Ladyship, that I am free to confess I felt a great degree of curiosity to see if you were at all like other women ; and I

* Southey's "Life of Wesley," II. 167.

am happy in having an opportunity of assuring your Ladyship of the very good opinion I have of you, and how very highly I estimate your character, your zeal, and abilities, which cannot be consecrated to a more noble purpose." He then spoke of the talents of some of her ladyship's preachers, who he understood were very eloquent men. "The Bishops," said he, "are very jealous of such men;" and he went on to mention a conversation he had lately had with a dignitary he would not name. This person had complained of the conduct of Lady Huntingdon's students and ministers, who had made a disturbance in his diocese. "Make Bishops of them—make Bishops of them," said the King. "That might be done," replied the Bishop; "but, please your Majesty, we cannot make a Bishop of Lady Huntingdon." "It would be a lucky circumstance if you could," added the Queen; to which the King added, "I wish there was a Lady Huntingdon in every diocese in the kingdom."

The result of the interview soon appeared in a letter, which probably remains an unparalleled piece of correspondence between a King and an Archbishop, at any rate in modern times: "My good Lord Prelate," said his Majesty, "I could not delay giving you the notification of the grief and concern with which my breast was affected, at receiving authentic information that routs have made their way into your palace. At the same time, I must signify to you my sentiments on this subject, which hold these levities and vain dissipations as utterly inexpedient, if not unlawful, to pass in a residence for many centuries devoted to Divine studies, religious retirement, and the extensive exercise of charity and benevolence; I add, in a place where so many of your predecessors have led their lives in such

sanctity as has thrown lustre on the pure religion they professed and adorned. From the dissatisfaction with which you must perceive I behold these improprieties, not to speak in harsher terms, and on still more pious principles, I trust you will suppress them immediately ; so that I may not have occasion to show any further marks of my displeasure, or to interpose in a different manner.”*

Several Bishops, who need no particular mention, were appointed during the earlier part of George III.'s reign, but I must make a passing reference to Edmund Law, raised to the See of Carlisle in 1769, because, though by no means a remarkable man, and rather weak than otherwise in his metaphysical speculations, he, in a work entitled “*Considerations on the Theory of Religion*,” broke new ground, by applying philosophical principles to a review of natural and revealed truths in their historical aspect, and tracing the development of sacred knowledge from age to age, so as to anticipate somewhat the study of Historical Theology, as pursued in the present day. Read in the light of subsequent productions his book may not appear striking, but in his own day he certainly said, on the subject now indicated, a good deal which was quite original.

Whilst appointments to high places were made in the manner described, several clergymen were much dissatisfied with the terms of subscription. Francis Blackburne, Archdeacon of Cleveland,—a learned, clever, and honest man, of firm decision, and of courage bordering on audacity, ready with his pen, addicted beyond measure to controversy, attacking Warburton, and Butler, and intensely disliking Secker,

* “*Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon*,” II. 283.

—appears to have been an Arian of the same type as Samuel Clarke. It is plain that he differed from the formularies of the Church in many respects; and it seemed to be a main object ever before him to seek a change in the law of clerical subscription. Relinquishing a position he had once held, namely, that the Church formularies were entitled to a wide interpretation, he attacked the principle of subscription altogether, contending that Churches had no right to make creeds, and that every creed contains material decisions from which an intelligent Christian, who has duly examined the Scriptures, may not unreasonably dissent.* He affirmed that to impose interpretations of the Bible is to interfere with the right of private judgment, so vigorously asserted at the period of the Reformation; and that to adopt Burnet's latitudinarian defence of the Articles was to plunge into "embarrassed and fluctuating casuistry." The right, or otherwise, of imposing subscription upon the ministers of a Church is a different question from that understood by the word "Toleration," and however the former may be settled, certainly the fact remains, that the law of subscription did not prevent the existence within the pale of the Establishment of a wide diversity of opinion on points assumed to have been settled by the Thirty-nine Articles. Subscription had certainly not prevented latitudinarianism and heterodoxy. Both had been thriving amongst the Clergy, in spite of the unfeigned assent and consent they had solemnly given to the contents of the Prayer Book, and those who had departed furthest from the standards they professed to follow, were now most zealous for their removal. In 1771 proposals were made for an application to

* "Confessional," Blackburne's "Works." V. 175.

Parliament on the subject. It was urged that the Clergy ought to be "delivered from this yoke of bondage," and that "orthodoxy," in the mouth of a Protestant, should only mean agreement with Scripture. In accordance with such proposals, a meeting of London clergymen was convened, when a petition drawn up by the zealous Archdeacon was adopted. It asserted the rights of conscience, and then it prayed for the Protestant privilege of interpreting Scripture without being bound by human explications. The document received 250 signatures, including those of thirty or forty physicians and lawyers. The petition, presented to the House of Commons in February, 1772, by Sir William Meredith, was opposed as a blow for "the absolute destruction of the Church;" and was supported on the ground that some of the Articles were "incomprehensible and self-contradictory." The ground taken was, not that subscription is useless, inasmuch as subscribers put their own sense, however unnatural, upon the Articles and formularies imposed, but that subscription is a hardship for those who do not believe in such Articles and formularies, and who therefore, in the judgment of orthodox people, had no business to be in a Church constituted as the Church of England was. The principal men on the Opposition side sustained the prayer; and when it was urged that sectaries would make their way into the Church, if subscription were relaxed, Sir George Savile exclaimed, addressing the Speaker, "Sectaries, Sir, had it not been for sectaries, this cause had been tried at Rome. I thank God it is tried here." He replied to Burke, who opposed the petition, and said that, for himself, he would not set bars in the way of those who were willing to enter and labour in the Church

of God. It should be added, that the Solicitor-General, the question being considered an open one, appeared during the course of the debate in antagonism with his colleagues; for, said he, "The Universities, which prepare for all the learned professions, and rear fit members of Parliament, ought not to be confined to those of a particular creed; and we must reform them, if they will not reform themselves."* The opening of the Universities to all denominations was a totally different question from that of admitting men of various creeds to the ministry of the Church, but both proposals shared the same fate. The proposal to receive the petition was negatived by 217 to 71; in our own time the object of the petitioners has been partially accomplished by an alteration in the terms of subscription, and by the abolition of certain tests at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

The Service for King Charles's day, as might be expected, strengthened the reasoning against subscription; and by a remarkable coincidence, the sermon preached on the 30th of January that year, by the Commons' Chaplain, helped the argument on the side of the petitioners. It is a curious fact, that the Speaker and four members only were present on the occasion, and, as a matter of form, the House returned thanks for the discourse. When printed, it was found to be a high-flown oration of the Sacheverell type; and consequently a distinguished member moved that it should be burnt by the hangman—a very awkward proposal, whilst a vote of thanks for it stood recorded in the Journals. The thanks were expunged, and the debates which they occasioned gave "fresh force and edge" to the matter of subscription. A motion followed

* "Parl. Hist.," XVII., 245.

for repealing the Act for observing the 30th of January, on the ground that the Service was no less than blasphemous, a parallel being drawn in it between King Charles and the blessed Saviour. Sir Roger Newdigate, member for the Oxford University, defended the Service, and took with him 125 votes against 97.

When attempts to obtain relief from subscription failed, there followed a movement for revising the Prayer Book. An appeal was made on this behalf to the Bishops, by a Kentish Incumbent, who urged, with justice and good sense, that if, by such a revision, Dissenters were not brought back to the Church, the Church itself would have the satisfaction of knowing it had done its duty in removing blemishes and sweeping stumbling-blocks out of the paths of conformity. Archbishop Cornwallis looked on the question of revision without prejudice; but in February, 1773, his Grace returned a formal answer, that, in the opinion of the Bench, nothing could prudently be done in the matter.

Coincident with these circumstances was an attempt to prevent dormant claims on the part of the Church to landed estates or other property;* consequently several Prelates became alarmed lest concerted attacks from different directions should be made on the rights and safeguards of the Establishment. The alarm increased when the Dissenters put in a claim to be relieved from the pressure of a clause in the Toleration Act, requiring that their ministers should subscribe to the doctrinal Articles. They felt encouraged to take

* Mr. Henry Seymour, in 1772, introduced but could not carry what was called the Church Nullum Tempus Bill. Stanhope's "Hist. of England," V. 302.

this step by arguments adduced during the debates just noticed—arguments irrefragable in reference to the liberties of those who were not included within the State Church. The Deputies continued their activity through the reign of George III. in extending the liberties of their brethren. They now completed an important measure which they had steadily pursued for some years. A London Corporation by-law had long annoyed Nonconformist citizens through the imposition of fines for not serving as Sheriffs, the fines so imposed being, it is said, employed in the erection of the Mansion House. As the Corporation Act rendered every person incapable of holding a civic office who had not within a year received the Lord's Supper in the Church of England, and as the Toleration Act had repealed the penal consequences of Dissent, some argued that on these grounds the Metropolitan system might be resisted with effect, and be eventually extinguished. Accordingly, when in 1754 three Dissenters were elected who declined to serve, and actions were brought against them, resistance was made through the encouragement of the Deputies, at first not successfully. In 1757, the Sheriff's Court decided in favour of the Corporation; but in 1762 a judgment was obtained in the Court of Hustings, favourable to the defendants. The Corporation endeavoured to set this aside by writ of error before the House of Lords, in the month of January, 1767, when Lord Mansfield delivered a memorable speech, and the case ended with a second reversal of what had been done in the Sheriff's Court.*

The Deputies, in March, 1772, took another step. By the Toleration Act, Protestant Dissenting Ministers

* "Hist. and Proceedings of the Deputies," 27-38.

and schoolmasters were exempted from penal laws against Nonconformity only on condition of their taking the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and also subscribing to a declaration against Popery, and to the doctrinal Articles of the Church of England. To relieve them from the last of these requirements, it was proposed to substitute the following words, "We believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain a revelation of the mind and will of God, and that we receive them as the rule of our faith and practice." The enforcement of the objectionable clause of the Toleration Act had fallen into desuetude; still it might at any moment be revived; and while it remained written in the statute book, it left upon Nonconformists a stigma and reproach. Sir Henry Hoghton, continuing his support of the cause promoted by the Deputies, brought a Bill before the Commons, proposing the alteration just mentioned. He was seconded by Sir George Savile; and the Bill having passed the Lower House, reached the Lords. The Bill was there thrown out by a large majority. Several of the Bishops, alarmed at this activity on the part of Nonconformists, set their faces against the measure, some of them backing their arguments against concession by certain passages from the works of Socinian Divines. Lord Camden, Lord Shelburne, Lord Mansfield, and Lord Chatham, however, supported the Bill; and perhaps it was on this occasion that the last-named nobleman uttered his famous witticism descriptive of the English Establishment, as "Popish in its Liturgy, Calvinistic in its Articles, and Arminian in its Clergy." In 1773, the Bill was re-introduced to Parliament in an amended form. On this occasion Burke came forward as the advocate of concession;

and when told that connivance was all which Dissenters could expect, inquired indignantly, "What, sir, is liberty by connivance, but a temporary relaxation of slavery?"* The idea of connivance exasperated the most eloquent of the Peers. "I hear," says Lord Chatham with characteristic warmth, writing at the time to a friend, "I hear in the debate on the Dissenters, the Ministry avowed enslaving them; and to keep up the cruel penal laws, like blood-hounds coupled up, to be let loose on the heels of these poor conscientious men, when Government pleases, *i.e.*, if they dare to dislike some ruinous measure or to disobey orders at an election."† The Bill was thrown out once more. But in 1779, Sir Henry Hoghton and his friends succeeded in their endeavours. An Act was passed enabling Nonconformist ministers and schoolmasters to pursue their calling without any subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles. At first no other subscription was substituted; but afterwards, in consequence of a motion by Lord North, it was required that a declaration should be made by persons seeking to be qualified under the Act, that they were Christians and Protestant Dissenters, and took the Scriptures as their rule of faith and practice.‡

In 1774 and 1760 there occurred three remarkable accessions to the Episcopal Bench. In the first of these years, Brownlow North became Bishop of Worcester; and in 1780 he reached the splendid See of Winchester. Descended from the Norths, who figured in the previous century, and brother to Lord North, the favourite

* May's "Constitutional History," III. 93.

† "Chatham's Correspondence," IV. 259. Letter to Lord Shelburne.

‡ May's "Constitutional History," III. 94.

minister of George III., his chances of preferment from birth and rank were obvious ; his dignified appearance and courtly manners, no doubt, being regarded as special qualifications for his position as Prelate of the Garter, an office attached to the Winchester episcopate. Judging from his portrait—in magnificent knightly mantle, with his collar and his St. George, his pleasant face surmounted by a ponderous wig—he must have looked eminently fitted to figure at Court, and to grace state ceremonials ; but when we learn that he was absent from his diocese for years during long continental travels, we cannot pronounce him an exemplary Bishop. The same year Richard Hurd obtained the See of Lichfield and Coventry, to be exchanged in 1781 for that of Worcester. Though of humble birth, he seems to have been a man of polished manners ; and at Hartlebury Castle, when he received his mother, a farmer's wife of no education, he would “with stately courtesy” lead her up to the head of the table—an incident to the credit of his character as a son and a gentleman. The “terse neat little thin man” does not seem, with all his graciousness, to have made many friends, if we are to believe the accounts given of him by some ; yet, on the other hand, it is said, “piety and goodness were so marked on his countenance, which is truly a fine one, that he has been named, and very justly, ‘the Beauty of Holiness.’” Indeed, in face, manner, demeanour and conversation, he seemed precisely, says Madame d’Arblay, what a Bishop should be, and what would make a looker-on, were he not a Bishop, and a See vacant,—cry out, “Take Dr. Hurd, that is the man.” The opinion thus expressed does not indicate any appreciation of the Episcopal office beyond that of its relation to superior society ; and with such reference

George III. pronounced him "the most naturally polite man he had ever known."* The aristocratic Brownlow North could not have maintained Episcopal dignity more sumptuously than the plebeian Richard Hurd; for when the latter went a quarter of a mile from the Castle to Hartlebury Church, it was in his coach, with servants in full dress liveries; and when he went to the Bristol Hot Wells, a favourite resort amidst fatigues of office, he was accompanied by a retinue of twelve attendants. Hurd added to qualities like those of North, some which North did not possess; for Hurd was a literary man, the friend and biographer of Warburton, and author of works which fill eight volumes. Warburton praised him as one of the best scholars in the kingdom; and Hurd repaid the obligation in the eulogiums he conferred on Warburton. A different man from either was Beilby Porteus, appointed to Chester in 1776, to London in 1787. Though not belonging exactly to the Evangelical school, he looked upon it with favour, and promoted its objects, such as a better observance of the Lord's day, the establishment of Sunday Schools, the encouragement of lay activity, and, at a later period, the support of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

In tracing the connection between religion and the State, we meet, in the year 1778, with a relaxation of penal laws bearing on Roman Catholics. Since the days of Elizabeth, they had been subjected to heavy persecution, and what arose out of political disaffection continued long after such disaffection had ceased. Catholic worship in public was proscribed, and the disciples of an ancient faith were driven into holes and corners, if they would celebrate their religious rites; of

* Kilvert's "Life of Hurd," 199.

which circumstance mementos may be found in concealed chambers of old decaying mansions in different parts of England. The Revolution did not place Roman Catholics on the same footing with orthodox Dissenters ; and in 1700, an Act of Parliament offered a reward of £100 for the discovery of any priest who dared to celebrate the offices of his Church. Yet Roman Catholics seem to have taken courage ; and we find Doddridge saying in one of his letters, "The growth of Popery seems to give a general and just alarm. A priest from a neighbouring gentleman's family makes frequent visits hither, and many of the Church people seem popishly inclined."*

The Rebellion of 1745 excited fresh indignation against English and Scotch Papists, because of the sympathy which some of them had manifested toward the grandson of James II. In this instance, as is often the case, the innocent suffered with the guilty ; and in-offensive people were sometimes harassed quite as much as their rebellious neighbours. Such persons pleaded their loyalty in an address to George III., trusting that their irreproachable conduct for many years sufficiently proved the honesty of their character as citizens ; and, in 1778, Sir George Savile, supported by Mr. Dunning, proposed the repeal of penalties, enacted in 1700—that priests should be imprisoned, that the estates of Roman Catholics educated abroad should be forfeited in favour of Protestant heirs, and that they should be incapable of holding real property. The statute of 1700, indeed, had not been rigidly enforced, yet instances of its execution had occurred ; and there was nothing but public opinion to prevent the revival, at any moment, of this tremendous power of oppression. These disabilities

* Doddridge's "Correspondence," III. 182.

were now removed, the Bill to that effect easily passing through both Houses ; one Whig Bishop, Hinchcliffe of Peterborough, alone opposing it in the Lords.* The effect was soon apparent. In 1780, as compared with 1767, the number of Roman Catholics increased from 67,916 to 69,376. They could now live in peace. Nobody could interfere with any priest who said mass in a family chapel, or in a public church. One situated at Oscott, near Birmingham, approached "through green meadows and silent lanes," witnessed the performance of Catholic rites, whilst many of the poor in the neighbourhood knelt at the altar. At a later period, especially at the time of the French Revolution, Catholic exiles sought refuge within our shores ; they provided for themselves churches, and established monastic institutions, and, in 1794, a stately mansion amidst the charming woods of Ribblesdale was transformed into the famous Stoneyhurst College.

There are people who import into Protestant zeal a popish-like intolerance. Many such were living in 1780, and with the cry of "No Popery," heightened by the recent Act of Relief, they proceeded to form Protestant Associations, under the leadership of George Gordon, a young nobleman, described by his admirers as a staunch Whig, an enemy to the American War, and a friend to the liberties of the people ; by others, as "a silly booby," "a laughing-stock," "a make-game," and a "fellow with a twist in his head." He called a public meeting at Coachmakers' Hall, in Noble Street, Foster Lane, where a petition was prepared for the repeal of the Act of 1778 ; and it was resolved that all the Members of the Association should meet in St. George's Fields, on the Surrey side of the river, at ten

* "Parl. Hist.," XIX. 1137-1145.

o'clock in the forenoon of Friday, the 2nd of July. On that summer day, 50,000 or 60,000, some say 100,000, people assembled in an open space, once famous for violets growing in "the water ditches," where, later on, mobs gathered for political purposes oddly described by Archbishop Laud in the "History of His Troubles." The members of the Association and their friends, wearing blue cockades, came to listen to Lord George, and then to convey a huge petition professedly containing 120,000 names, to the House of Commons. Many readers will remember the excitement in April, 1848, when the Chartists assembled on Kennington Common for a different purpose, but in a somewhat similar manner. Unfortunately the wise precautions taken in the latter instance were not adopted in the former; and with only parish beadles and helpless watchmen to keep the peace, the Protestant mob had it their own way. They marched in three detachments, under banners inscribed with the words "*No Popery*;" and at Charing Cross were joined by numerous allies on horseback and in carriages. The narrow streets were blocked up with swelling multitudes, and Palace Yard was soon packed by a riotous mob. Lord Mansfield, who had recently told a jury to acquit a Catholic priest charged with celebrating mass, had his carriage windows broken; and, having scrambled into the House of Lords, "he sat quivering on the woolsack like an aspen." The Archbishop of York had his lawn sleeves torn off and flung in his face. The Bishop of Lincoln, on his way to Parliament, sought refuge in a house, from which he escaped, according to rumour, in a woman's dress, along the leads. The populace saluted Lord Bathurst as "the Pope," and an "old woman;" "the notion of Pope Joan," as Horace Wal-

pole said, "being thus split into two." A gentleman in black, riding in the Duke of Northumberland's carriage, was pronounced a Jesuit confessor, and his Grace's pocket picked of watch and purse. Other acts of violence followed, and the temporal Peers were treated worse than the spiritual ones. At the same time the mob rushed into the lobby of the Commons' House with shrieks of "No Popery! No Popery! Repeal! Repeal!" The Sergeant-at-Arms and other officers were defied, much to the amazement and terror of the members in cocked hats and big wigs sitting within St. Stephen's Chapel, then boxed up with galleries, like a Dissenting meeting-house. From the top of the stairs, Lord George harangued his friends, telling them to persevere, and calling out the names of obnoxious members—Lord North and Mr. Burke amongst the rest. At length, the House divided on the question of receiving the monster petition; 8 voted for it, and 194 against it.

The "Protestants" now became furious, and proceeded to burn down the chapels of Popish Embassies. Next evening they attacked the dwellings of Roman Catholics in Moorfields; on and on the excitement rolled, the blue cockades appearing all over the city and the suburbs. Savile House, in Leicester Fields, was assailed; and then the miserable fanatic who had taken the lead in the business began to disavow all share in the riots. Gibbon wrote, "Forty thousand Puritans, such as they might be in the time of Cromwell, have started out of their graves;" but here the historian is seen at fault, for nothing like this had ever been seen during the Civil Wars. Escaped from the control of their leaders, the fanatic multitudes continued their excesses, still burning with professed

religious zeal—still shouting “No Popery! No Popery!” Then came the conflagration of Newgate, the flames mounting up to heaven; the sky black with smoke; embers flying over the neighbouring houses; prisoners in chains rushing about the streets; “any one might get in, and, what was never the case before, any one might get out.” Lord Mansfield’s House, in Bloomsbury Square, was fired, his furniture, books, and curiosities were burnt whilst his cellars were drained; the flames in different parts of the City not being extinguished until the 9th of July. “The sight,” says Dr. Johnson, “was dreadful, thirty-six fires all blazing at one time.” Lord George was tried for treason and acquitted, but he died in Newgate. “He began his career as a midshipman, he ended his career as a Jew.”* An odd antithesis; but, beyond all doubt, he was a mad fanatic during part of a life, which ignominiously terminated in Newgate.

Roman Catholics, then as now, were not all of one mind on a question which more than any other aroused the opposition of Protestant Englishmen, namely, the Pope’s Infallibility, in connection with a claim to the power of deposing sovereigns from their thrones. Alban Butler, author of “Lives of the Saints,” in one of his letters on “Bowyer’s History of the Popes,” distinctly remarked that, “though some private Divines think that the Pope, by the assistance of some special providence, cannot err in the decisions of faith solemnly published by him with the mature advice of his Council, or the Clergy, or the Divines of his Church, yet it is denied by others; the learned Bossuet and many others, especially of the school of Sorbonne, have written warmly against that opinion. No Catholic

* Lord Stanhope’s “History of England,” VII. 28–31, 240.

looks upon it as an article or term of communion.”* This passage has a seasonable importance, read in the light of the conclusion reached by the Vatican Council ; but the main purpose for its introduction here is to show that some English Catholics of the last century were averse to the ultramontane theory, the maintenance of which by others had greatly prejudiced their cause, and had hindered the progress of political freedom. In 1782 a committee was formed of liberal laymen in communion with Rome, to attend to the affairs of the Roman Catholic body in England. They proposed that a new oath of allegiance should be framed, protesting against the temporal authority of the Pope, his right to excommunicate kings and absolve subjects, and the assumed idea, that Catholics were not bound to keep faith with Protestants. A committee was formed with the title of *Protesting Catholic Dissenters*, who resisted certain decisions of their Bishops, as “ encroaching on their natural Civil and Religious rights.” Even attempts were made to obtain the power of appointing Bishops by the Clergy and people.† Persons

* Life of Butler prefixed to his “ Lives of the Saints,” I. xiv.

† Dr. Schaff in his “ History of the Creeds,” 90, states that the Archbishop of St. Louis, Peter Richard Kenrick, was an opponent of the infallibility dogma in the Vatican Council, but afterwards submitted. “ In a lengthy and remarkable speech which he had prepared for the Vatican Council, but was prevented from delivering by the sudden close of the discussion, June 3, 1870, he shows that the doctrine of papal infallibility was not believed either in Ireland, his former home, or in America ; on the contrary that it was formally and solemnly disowned by British Bishops prior to the Catholic Emancipation Bill.” (See Friedrich’s “ Documenta,” I. 189–226.) Oxenham, in his translation of Döllinger’s “ Reunion of Churches,” 126, says that in Keenan’s “ Controversial Catechism,” the doctrine of papal infallibility is repudiated as an article of the Catholic faith, and treated as a Protestant calumny : but that since 1871, the leaf containing this assertion is cancelled. (See also “ Hist. of the Creeds,” 183.)

supporting these views were numerous and influential, including several noblemen ; but the four Vicars Apostolic, who, sheltered by the Act of 1778, could publicly exercise priestly and episcopal functions, disliked the appellation of "Protesting Catholic Dissenters;" and in discussions on the subject, a leading part was taken by the learned Dr. Milner, agent for the Bishops of the Western and Northern districts. He became acquainted with Pitt, Fox, Dundas, and Wyndham, and also with Bishop Horsley, upon whom he made a very favourable impression. A Bill brought in by Mr. Mitford in 1791, for the relief of "Protesting Catholic Dissenters," provided for the enforcement of a new and modified oath of abjuration ; but through Milner's influence Fox helped to defeat the proposal.*

* "Parl. Hist.," XXIX. 113-115, 664 ; May's "Constit. Hist. of England," III. 107.

CHAPTER VII.

A CONSIDERABLE time having elapsed since the last application to Parliament for a repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, the committee of Dissenting Deputies in 1786 determined to re-open the question. In consequence of their appeals, a movement was made in different parts of the country, of which an instance may be mentioned as occurring in the City of Norwich, so distinguished by its Puritan traditions,—where the Presbyterians, the Independents, and the Baptists united together in the assertion of political rights. One of the ministers, “not sanguine in the matter, but thinking it right to do what he could” for the sake of posterity, communicated to a friend, what he deemed an encouraging fact, that at the meeting there was an Alderman in the chair. In 1787 the Deputies waited on Mr. Pitt to solicit his offices on their behalf. On the 28th of March in that year a motion was made for the repeal, by Mr. Beaufoy, seconded by Sir Henry Hoghton, and supported by Charles James Fox, Lord Beauchamp, and William Smith. The usual arguments were urged on both sides. After a debate in the House of Commons of seven hours, the motion was negatived by 178 to 100. Not discouraged by this defeat, the Deputies renewed their exertions in

1789, when Mr. Beaufoy again made a motion, seconded by Sir Henry Hoghton : "That the House resolve itself into a committee to consider so much of the Acts of the 13th of Charles II. for regulating Corporations, and of the 25th of Charles II. for preventing dangers from popish recusants, as renders it necessary for persons holding places of trust under the Crown to receive the sacrament." So ran the new motion ; but the attempt failed like the former, only that the majority dropped to 124 against 104, a result which encouraged the Dissenters. In 1790 they returned to the subject, and solicited Mr. Fox to lead their cause. Mr. Fox gave notice on the 15th of February, 1790, that in the month of March he would bring in a Bill for the repeal of the Acts. He did so in a speech of great power.

The conduct of the Dissenters, he said, had been uniformly peaceable, the State had nothing to apprehend either from their disloyalty or ambition. He wished he could say as much of all other sects. The High Church party, which had happily been dormant for a great number of years, was now reviving. It had not been dead as he had hoped, but had only, for a time it seems, lain asleep. Their constant cry had ever been "the Church is in danger." He was sorry to observe some dignitaries of the Church, men of distinguished talents, whom he held in great respect, join in the absurd alarm, and express their affected and chimerical apprehension of danger upon the present occasion. Were there not many avowed Dissenters both in that and the other House of Parliament? Yet no danger was ever entertained from that circumstance to the constitution. "But," say the party, "if you make a Dissenter an exciseman there will be

danger.”* Mr. Pitt contended that the Establishment would be imperilled by the removal of tests, because Dissenters, admitted to office, would use all legal means for subverting what they disliked, and Burke, vehement in his opposition, dwelt with warmth upon the hostility towards the Church recently manifested by Price and Priestley. Upon a division the supporters of the measure were defeated by a majority of nearly three to one. It may appear wonderful to many that this piece of intolerance in the legislation of England should be retained for nearly forty years after that period, especially as it remained practically abortive, except in the way of casting a reflection upon Dissenters; for an annual Act ever since 1727 was passed to indemnify those who accepted office without qualifying themselves according to the law. But the circumstances and spirit of the times, so different from our own, must be taken into account, not to vindicate or excuse, but to explain, at least in part, the conduct of many politicians at that crisis.

It is impossible to understand the nature and issue of the debate just noticed without glancing at the French Revolution, and at the effect it produced on English society. The meeting of the States General had been held in May, 1789, and had proclaimed liberty and equality. The third Estate had declared itself the National Assembly, and had absorbed all power within its own hands. The people had risen against the troops, and the Bastille had been razed to the ground in the summer of the same year. The nobility had emigrated. The rights of man, the abolition of feudal and aristocratic privileges, and the liberty of the press had been authoritatively asserted.

* “Parl. Hist.,” XXVIII., 394.

The palace of Versailles had been attacked, and the King brought to Paris. It takes away one's breath to enumerate the startling events which occurred in a few short months. Of course Englishmen felt the deepest interest in these astounding changes. They were divided into two parties. Some thought only or chiefly of the previous history of France, a history of misgovernment in the State, and of corruption in the Church; of oppression on the side of rulers, and endurance of wrong on the side of the ruled; of the most frightful abuse of political power, and the most frightful perversion of religious truth. In the troubles which befell the royal family and the upper classes, they saw the just Nemesis of Providence, the necessary consequence of previous tyranny and unrighteousness. The overthrow of so much evil gave them satisfaction. An age of wickedness had come to an end; a better day seemed about to dawn. They were full of hope. Others thought only, or chiefly, of the disturbance of order; of the convulsion of society; of the sufferings endured by men and women brought up in the lap of luxury; of the disappearance of chivalry and refinement amidst the surging waves of democratic vulgarity; of the shock given to thrones; of the tottering position of the Church; of growing licentiousness under the name of liberty, and advancing infidelity under the name of reason. To such beholders the heavens were overspread with thunder-clouds, while, where they stood, they felt the throes of a coming earthquake.

Dr. Richard Price may be taken as a type of the first class. A metaphysician, a moralist, a financier, and a master of calculation which comes out curiously in some of his theological disquisitions, he also took up with characteristic energy the study of politics. He had

sympathized with America in the War of Independence, and enjoyed the confidence of Dr. Franklin. On the 4th of November, 1789, in the midst of the changes just enumerated, he preached a sermon at the Presbyterian Meeting House of the Old Jewry. He chose for his subject "the Love of our Country," upon which he dilated at some length, dwelling upon truth, virtue, and liberty as those "blessings in which the interest of our country lies, and to the attainment of which our love of it ought to direct our endeavours." At the close of the discourse, the preacher burst forth into an impassioned eulogium upon what had been effected by the French Revolution up to that time—some while, it should be noticed, before the Reign of Terror, and the execution of Louis XVI. The Declaration of Rights, proclaimed in Paris—expressing principles which are now adopted by almost all Englishmen—fired Price with the utmost enthusiasm, and opened bright prospects of national prosperity on the other side the Channel.

From Richard Price we must turn to Edmund Burke, the philosophical statesman, who may be taken as a type of the other class. Price's sermon attracted his attention, and, in reply, he wrote and published in 1790 his elaborate "Reflections on the Revolution in France." He denounced the discourse as the declamation of a man connected with literary caballers, intriguing philosophers, and political theologians; and, in contrast with Price's glowing hopes, Burke painted scenes of desolation and misery. The Queen startled when asleep by the voice of the sentinel crying out to save herself by flight; ruffians, reeking with blood, rushing into her chamber; the King, the Queen, and their infant children forced to abandon their palace

swimming with blood, polluted by massacre, and strewn with scattered limbs and mutilated carcasses. With all this he contrasted the conservatism of England. "We are not the converts of Rousseau ; we are not the disciples of Voltaire ; Helvetius has made no progress among us ; atheists are not our preachers ; madmen are not our law-givers." "We know, and it is our pride to know, that man is, by his constitution, a religious animal ; that atheism is not only against our reason, but our instincts, and cannot prevail long." "We are resolved to keep an established Church, an established monarchy, and an established aristocracy, each in the degree it exists, and no greater."* Though Price's sermon contains a great deal to which all Liberal politicians in the present day would subscribe, there are passages in it which crossed the prejudices and aroused the fears of Tory citizens at that season of excitement ; on the other hand, Burke attributed to Price designs for which no warrant is given in the discourse, and said a great deal which it would be difficult to reconcile with the principles of the Revolution of 1688. Price of course opposed the Test and Corporation Acts, and, in common with many of his Dissenting friends, zealously sought their repeal. Burke, looking at the question through the medium of the French Revolution, fancied he saw in their repeal the destruction of a breakwater against mischievous changes in Church and State. Nothing can be more futile than his reasoning, regarded in the light of subsequent history ; the Test and Corporation Acts are gone, and are now confessed by all parties to have been sources of weakness, not props of strength, to the political and ecclesiastical constitution of the country.

* "Reflections," 91, 162, 179, 181, 192, 216, 225.

But the terror produced in so many quarters by the Revolution sufficiently accounts for the resistance made at the time to the Bill introduced by Fox. In 1791 came the flight of Louis XVI.; in 1792 the sway of the Jacobins and the abolition of Royalty; in 1793 succeeded the execution of the monarch and the Reign of Terror; in 1794 the execution of the Queen. Tragical events occurring from month to month in Paris created a profound sensation throughout England. The two parties on this side the water came into more determined collision than ever. Those who thought with Price, made the best they could of the frightful excesses committed, and anticipated the purification of the social atmosphere by passing storms. Those who thought with Burke, insisted upon the correctness of his predictions, and the justness of their fears. As is ever the case in times of excitement, each party saw little but what was wrong on the side assailed, little but what was right on the side espoused. Even religious people excused the violence of the Parisian democrats. What they read in the *Morning Chronicle*, the Liberal organ of the day, they construed in favour of the cause of reform and freedom; but other religious people regarded the state of French affairs with the utmost horror. Few there were who did not rank with Fox and Price, or with Pitt and Burke; but some, with a wise discrimination, separated between good and evil abroad, and religious and irreligious elements at home. Whilst they maintained the political rights of society, they detected the destructive tendencies of infidelity.

Though Dissenters had obtained a measure of relief in 1772 and 1773, there was a strong feeling manifested against them in 1790 and 1791. When Burke, in

March, 1790, read to the House of Commons extracts from the writings of Priestley and others, he conveyed the impression that Nonconformity was inimical to the Church of England, and that the Establishment had fallen into greater danger than the Church of France a year or two before. This politician also inveighed against the introduction of politics into Nonconformist pulpits, saying that "no sound ought to be heard in the Church but the healing voice of Christian charity;" forgetting that politics, on the other side, were as vehemently advanced in cathedrals and parish edifices; indeed, that sometimes "they resounded with language, at which Laud would have shuddered, and Sacheverell would have blushed."

Under the inspiration of Burke's book and Burke's speeches, increased by sermons preached at church, there rose once more throughout the country a cry of "the Church in danger," and the "Familiar Letters to the Inhabitants of Birmingham," by Dr. Priestley, who opposed the Establishment, while he praised the Constitution of England, augmented the tumult. A Royal proclamation dated July 11, 1791, denounced "a certain scandalous and seditious paper" printed and published at Birmingham, and offered £100 for the discovery of the writer. The paper thus condemned invited the people to celebrate the destruction of the Bastille in Paris, and also attacked the English Parliament as venal, the English Ministers as hypocritical, the English Clergy as oppressors, the reigning family as extravagant, and the crown as too heavy for the head that carried it. Though the infamous placard made its appearance in Birmingham, it is said to have been concocted in London. At all events, a party assembled at a tavern in the town to celebrate the

triumph of the French Revolution, and another party, assembled at another tavern, the same day, to toast Church and King. Outside, mobs hissed and hooted, but the dinners passed off without disturbance indoors. After the first company had separated, the rabble broke into the room, declaring that they "wanted to knock the powder out of Priestley's wig;" encouraged in their exploit, it is reported, by what had been said in a speech delivered at the other celebration. Soon afterwards Priestley's meeting-house was in flames. Another meeting-house shared the same fate. Then the mob marched to Fair Hill, where Priestley lived, and destroyed his dwelling, his furniture, his books, and his philosophical instruments. When the riot began, the Doctor was quietly at home, and he now refused to accept defence against the ruffians, because he had scruples as to resisting persecution by force. He and his family were conducted to a place of refuge, and then the work of demolition was accomplished. From the 14th to the 17th of July Birmingham fell into the hands of the rioters. Houses of Dissenters were consumed; wretches got drunk in a wine cellar, and perished in the flames they had kindled; warehouses were plundered and other atrocities committed. The magistrates at first were content with issuing an appeal to "Friends and Brother Churchmen," to desist, since the damage would fall on the parishes. At last, Light Dragoons rode into the town, the mobs were dispersed, several culprits were tried, and three of the number were executed.

The Unitarians, to whom Priestley belonged, suffered more than other Dissenters from penal enactments. The 9th and 10th of William III., for suppressing blasphemy and profaneness, proscribed the public

maintenance of Socinian opinions ; and though the law was not put in operation it remained on the Statute Book, to the discredit of a respectable body of citizens. Fox, in May, 1792, proposed to repeal so much of the law as affected Unitarians. Referring to the prejudices against this denomination, he said Dr. South had traced their pedigree from wretch to wretch, back to the devil himself ; but that these descendants of the devil were now his clients, and he claimed, on their behalf, the same toleration as was accorded to orthodox Nonconformists ; at the same time, he pointed to the Birmingham riots as the natural result of bigotry and persecution. Burke again appealed to the facts of the French Revolution as a warning to this country ; and described Fox's clients as allies of the Jacobins, and disciples of Tom Paine. Fox's motion was defeated by 142 against 63.* Party rancour increased, and politics being mixed up with religion, sedition and treason, no less than heresy and schism, were laid to the charge of certain Dissenters ; and the case of William Winterbotham, a Baptist minister, as reported in the State trials, affords a striking example of the government at that time.

It will be remembered that in 1736, Quakers had applied to Parliament for the abolition of vexatious methods of enforcing tithes ; and a measure for that purpose passed the Commons, but was defeated by the Lords. Under the old law still in existence, Friends were exposed to much hardship, and in 1796 seven of them were in York Castle, without any prospect of deliverance. Sergeant Adair, on the 21st of April that year, proposed a Bill to facilitate the recovery of tithes, without the infliction of imprison-

* "Parl. Hist.," XXIX. 1372.

ment. Again the Bill passed the Commons, but the Archbishop of Canterbury headed an opposition in the Lords, on the ground that there remained no sufficient time for the consideration of so important a question ; a course of proceeding in exact accordance with a precedent set in the same House on the previous occasion of the Quaker appeal.* The next session the Bill reappeared, when Sir William Scott, afterwards Lord Stowell, declared the opinions held by the Quakers were of such a nature as to affect the civil rights of property, and therefore he considered them as unworthy of legislative indulgence. He argued if one man had scruples against the payment of tithes, to which his property was legally liable, another might object to the payment of rent as sinful, while a third might hold it irreligious to pay his debts. If the principle of indulgence were ever admitted, the sect of anti-tithe Christians would soon become the most numerous and flourishing in the kingdom ;—a course of reasoning quite beside the mark, as the Quaker did not seek to be relieved from tithe payments, but only from the cruel method of enforcing them. They had conscientious scruples about voluntary payment ; but they were prepared quietly to suffer distraint upon their property for that purpose. What they complained of was, the oppressive litigation and the unrighteous imprisonment to which they were exposed ; and therefore it could be replied that the tithe owner would be enabled by the proposed Bill to recover his demands by summary distress, instead of punishing a conscientious and peaceable neighbour, by an ignominious and painful incarceration. The Speaker decided by a

* See "Parliamentary History," XXXII. 1022, and page 11 of this Volume.

casting vote for going into committee on the Bill, but the Bill was afterwards lost by a majority of sixteen.

Before closing this review of the relations of the State to religion, it is proper to notice a check which Parliament, towards the end of the century, put upon simoniacal practices in the Establishment. In 1783 an appeal was made to the House of Lords from a decision of Lord Loughborough respecting what were called Bonds of resignation. Laymen having rights of presentation, received from a clerk, when presented to a living, a bond to resign when called upon to do so. The practice not only put the Clergy in a state of dependence inconsistent with their office as ministers of the gospel, but also frequently involved a simoniacal contract, by which a patron obtained money for presentation to a benefice actually vacant. Lord Loughborough had decided that such bonds were legal, but in 1782 the House of Lords reversed that decision.

Again, in 1800 another practice of a kindred description disappears. It had become common upon purchasing an advowson to take a lease of the tithes, glebe, and parsonage house for ninety-nine years, on a pepper-corn rent, and to enter into possession of the premises, and the profits, as if there had been an actual resignation. The Bishop's authority to refuse acceptance of a resignation, if he thought it proceeded from improper motives, could be thus set aside; and scandalous manœuvres thus crept into the Establishment. The Bishop of London saw the mischief, and determined to do what he could to terminate it. He therefore refused to institute a clergyman, who had taken a lease of the kind described, and after long and expensive litigation accomplished his object. "The abatement of these evils was the first breaking in

upon that great crust of abuses, which had been long hardening around the Church of England."*

Within the last twenty years of the eighteenth century some important changes occurred on the Episcopal bench. Robert Watson rose to the See of Llandaff, in 1782. A Westmoreland boy, admitted at Cambridge as a sizar dressed in a coarse mottled coat and blue yarn stockings, he won a scholarship, became a Tutor and a Fellow, qualified himself in the course of a few months for the professorship of chemistry, and seven years afterwards we find him *Regius Professor of Divinity*. He prided himself on being the "self-taught professor," and in other ways exhibited originality and independence. He wrote letters under the signature of "a Christian Whig," with the view of abolishing subscription. He vindicated the French Revolution in a sermon, which made much noise, but gave great offence at Court ; and, what chiefly recommended him as a theologian, he wrote an "Apology for Christianity," in answer to Gibbon. His promotion to Llandaff arose from a desire on the part of Lord Shelburne, the Prime Minister, to gratify the Duke of Rutland, Watson's friend, and next to secure the support and service of a very able man as partisan in the House of Lords. Instead of proving a pillar to the administration, the independent Prelate advocated the equalization of episcopal revenues, greatly to the disgust of his friends, and the embarrassment of the administration. Yet he helped the Whig party by some clever speeches, and threw himself into politics, to the neglect of sacred responsibilities. He had before held a professorship, an archdeaconry, and two rectories, as sinecures or nearly so ; and now he completely set

* Perry's "Hist. of the Church of England," III. 485.

aside diocesan duties, yet grumbled at the sacrifices he made for the cause of civil and religious liberty. Hence, Robert Hall said of him, "having married public virtue in his early days, he seemed for ever afterwards to be quarrelling with his wife."* His most popular book is "The Apology for the Bible," which appeared in 1798, and won for him a theological reputation such as he had not before possessed. It was followed by a still more popular publication, "An Address to the People of Great Britain," energetically supporting the war against France, showing that the opinion Watson had formed of the Revolution underwent a change as he watched its ambitious and sanguinary developments.

In 1783 the brilliant scenes at Lambeth were overshadowed by the death of Archbishop Cornwallis, and the primacy was offered to two Prelates; first to Lowth, then Bishop of London, who declined the honour, because of personal infirmity and domestic affliction; and next to Hurd, who preferred remaining at Hartlebury, where he was diligently engaged in the collection of a magnificent library. The two are said to have united in recommending Moore, then Bishop of Bangor, for the vacant post; a clergyman whose rise in the Church had been most remarkable. Born in the city of Gloucester, the son of a butcher, he entered Pembroke College, Oxford, where he so well succeeded in his studies, that he was chosen by the Duke of Marlborough as tutor to his son. It is said of him, that "he avoided all activity but that of Christian piety and spiritual duty, and scarcely took any part in political disputes." Neither did he take "any steps to inflame the minds of the Dissenters on the one

* Hall's "Works," VI. 125.

hand, nor to alarm the friends of orthodoxy on the other." Dr. Pretyman, who assumed the name of Tomline, became Bishop of Lincoln in 1787, and at the same time obtained the Deanery of St. Paul's. Tutor to Mr. Pitt, he had served him as secretary when the great statesman was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and also when First Lord of the Treasury. Partly as a reward for these services, Tomline received his preferments; but he had other recommendations. Not only as a scholar, but as a theologian he made some mark in English literature, his "Elements," and his "Refutation of Calvinism," showing very plainly how opposed he was to "evangelical" sentiments. He lived far into the present century, and it is recorded of him, in contrast with his brother of Llandaff, that during the thirty-three years of his episcopate, he regularly performed a triennial visitation, a thing never done by any of his predecessors.

A much abler man than Tomline, if not so original as Watson, was Samuel Horsley. His literary fame rests chiefly on his letters in reply to Priestley; a production remarkable for learning, acuteness, and general ability, but sadly wanting in the courtesies of controversy. He assailed the doctrines of Unitarianism with unmerciful vehemence, and forgot the distinction between principles and persons. In controversy he more resembled Goliath of Gath, the staff of whose "spear was like a weaver's beam," than that Divine Master, who would not break the "bruised reed," nor quench the "smoking flax." It is true, that Priestley did not resemble the reed or the flax; but Horsley was the kind of man, who cared little about the temper of his opponents, whether gentle or otherwise, being borne away by fierce storms in his own heart. Horsley

was a Biblical critic, and wrote a work on the Psalms, of little value, as it abounds in conjectural emendations of the text, and contains numerous notes as unsound as they are ingenious. Lord Chancellor Thurlow, as Lord Chancellor, gave him a stall at Gloucester, saying that those who defended the Church ought to be supported by the Church, and in 1788 he became Bishop of St. David's. He figured in Parliament as a supporter of Pitt's administration, and whilst his overbearing spirit did not adorn his character, his political opinions were thought by many quite inconsistent with the liberal genius and spirit of the English constitution. He was translated to Rochester in 1793, and to St. Asaph in 1802. In the pulpit Horsley appeared to great advantage. His sermons are masterpieces of eloquence; and if some of them contain specimens of Biblical interpretation, ingenious but doubtful, others present instances of truth and originality in rare combination; and in one case at least, that of his sermons on the Syrophenician woman, Horsley evinces a mastery over the human affections, no less than over the human understanding. Many an eloquent sermon has been preached in Westminster Abbey, but perhaps rarely, if ever, was there one so effective as that delivered by Horsley in 1793. It was on the anniversary of the execution of Charles I., and a few days after Louis XVI. had been guillotined. Those who are old enough to remember people who lived during the French Revolution know well through what a state of excitement our forefathers then passed; how terrified they were, and no wonder, at the tidings coming over from Paris of blasphemy and murder; and how their fears magnified disaffection existing in their own country into a prelude and sign of like

enormities. Just then, the sermon alluded to was preached; the House of Lords attended the service; the temporal Peers on the south side, the Bishops on the north. Horsley, in his lawn sleeves, and with a manner never to be forgotten, burst out into a peroration in which he combined the regicides of England and the regicides of France. "Oh my country," he exclaimed, "read the horror of thy own deed in this heightened imitation, and lament and weep that this black French treason should have found its example in that crime of thy unnatural sons." And as the words reached the ears of assembled lords, they rose, with one accord, from their seats, and remained standing to the end of the discourse. The Deanery of Westminster fell vacant through the death of Dr. Thomas; and it is commonly thought that this preferment was immediately bestowed on Horsley, as a reward for his eloquence. "His despotic utterances," observes the present occupant of the office, very unlike to him in this respect, "remain in the tones of his chapter orders:" "We the Dean do peremptorily command and enjoin," etc.; and it is further related that he wore his red ribbon in every time and place, like Louis XIV., who went to bed in his wig. An overbearing style is apparent enough in his writings, especially in his controversial letters; but it ought to be added, as an instance of the mingling of very different qualities in the same person, that his stay in office was marked by special consideration for the welfare of his ecclesiastical subordinates, and that when he died at Brighton, in 1806, "the choir of Westminster Abbey attended his funeral at Stoke Newington, to testify their gratitude." *

* Stanley's "Memorials of Westminster Abbey," 475. (First edition.)

Within two years after Horsley succeeded to St. David's, another episcopal appointment took place which requires notice. George Horne attained to high distinction in the University of Oxford, and in 1768 rose to be Principal of Magdalen College. Cultivating pious veneration for Scripture, he erroneously feared the results of criticism pursued by Kennicott, who collected various readings for his Hebrew Bible ; he also adopted, to some extent, the system of philosophy and the method of interpretation, which bears the title of "Hutchinsonianism." John Hutchinson was a clergyman of the Church of England, who died in 1737. Addicted to the study of natural science as well as divinity, he sought to blend the two systems into one ; and, making the Bible a test of philosophy, he aimed at bringing astronomy, and everything else, into accordance with what he took to be the meaning of Revelation. He wrote a curious work, entitled "Moses' Principia," in reference to the law of gravitation taught in "Newton's Principia." Dr. Horne published a pamphlet, entitled "A Fair, Candid, and Impartial State of the Case between Sir Isaac Newton and Mr. Hutchinson," now almost entirely forgotten, in which he did not question the mathematical calculations of Sir Isaac, but treating gravitation as a power left unexplained by our great philosopher, he proceeds to attempt a solution of the mystery on the Hutchinsonian principle of a Divine plenum in nature. Further, according to the Hutchinsonian method, he found mystical meanings in the Old Testament, where other people could not. His "Commentary on the Psalms" speedily attained an immense popularity, and never will devout minds fail to derive edification from its perusal ; the Introduction to it by its tender beauty

continues to inspire admiration in the minds of many unprepared to accept his comments. His "Letter to Dr. Smith," on the death of Hume, and his "Letters on Infidelity," written afterwards, display sharpness of wit, which, however entertaining to those who agree with the excellent author, scarcely tends to conciliate or convince the sceptic. As a preacher, Horne excelled in a style of composition and delivery, then uncommon with orthodox Divines. He sought to make his pulpit addresses popular, not with the view of catching applause, but that he might win over multitudes to the service of his Master. He had not the stiff orthodoxy of Tomline, or the original genius of Watson, or the overwhelming force of Horsley; but he had in his gentle piety, amiable manners and devotional zeal, episcopal qualifications which went beyond theirs. When he had been made Bishop of Norwich in 1790, after having been Dean of Canterbury for nine years, a Norwich clergyman wrote to a friend, "Report tells us, that the Dean of Canterbury is to be our Bishop." "Yes," replied a clerical friend in the metropolis, "so I hear, and I am glad of it, for he will make a truly Christian Bishop." "Indeed," rejoined the other; "well I do not know him myself, being a Cambridge man; but it is currently reported at Norwich, that he is a Methodist." Such talk reflects the habit of the times; every new Bishop excited curiosity, and every one more earnest than others incurred the epithet of "Methodistical." Horne seems to have been too feeble at the time of his appointment to accomplish much. "Alas!" he exclaimed, as he entered the old palace doorway, "I have come to these steps at a time of life when I can neither go up them nor down them with safety."* He

* "Life of Horne," prefixed to his "Works," I. 160.

retained his See only about two years, a circumstance often forgotten when mention is made of *Bishop Horne's Commentary*. It was published fourteen years before his consecration.

Passing from Episcopal palaces let us glance at Episcopal temples.

To the metropolitan cathedral of St. Paul's Royal visits were paid. George II. never appeared there in state, but when George III. recovered from his mental malady, in 1789, he, with Queen Charlotte, the Prince of Wales, and other members of his family, attended Divine worship in the City, to return thanks for the Divine mercy, and on the occasion six thousand children lifted up their voices to God in the service of song. Again, in 1797, the same Royal personages entered the nave, in solemn procession, when the French, Spanish and Dutch flags were borne aloft, in celebration of the victory just won by the English fleet. Also before the century closed, the remains of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who had reaped harvests of fame in far other ways, were laid to rest in the crypt, at the feet of Sir Christopher Wren, with almost royal magnificence. Some provincial cathedrals witnessed other observances. Relics of mediæval pageantry lingered at Norwich, and on Guild day, in the month of June, the Corporation continued—the practice lasted until the passing of the Municipal Reform Act—to attend at the cathedral, accompanied by emblems belonging to the old Guild of St. George. An effigy of the dragon was carried to the door, and the six whiffers in bright-coloured costume, waved their swords in strange fashion, as the Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council, with stately step, marched between crowds of their fellow citizens, over a carpet of rushes thickly strewn on the

pavement of the nave, to hear, in the choir, morning prayer and a sermon preached by the Mayor's chaplain. Reminiscences of early religious traditions also existed at Norwich and Bradford, in the celebration of the Feast of Bishop Blaize, who through the slender link of his legendary martyrdom, by iron instruments of torture resembling combs, came to be chosen as the patron saint of the woolcombers. On the 3rd of February, the effigy of this saint used to be carried through the streets in a richly decorated chariot, shepherdesses riding on ponies, folding in their bosoms tiny lambs, while the Golden Fleece of Jason figured in the procession, and this curious combination of classical mythology with the legends of the Church, kept its ground in the popular mind down to a recent period.

A remarkable exception to the use of such religious services as were established by the State, took place at Winchester just before the close of George II.'s reign. Hessian troops being quartered in the city, were allowed to worship in the cathedral. "Their service," says the Bishop's chaplain, "is in the way of our Dissenters,—first a psalm, very long, in which every soldier bore his part; each having a book, and behaving in that and the other parts of the service with all possible decency and attention." "The psalm was set by a sergeant of grenadiers, a noble stately fellow, who had a vast pair of whiskers like birch brooms." "When the psalm was ended, a very solemn Divine in a black cloak gave us a sermon in their language, after a prayer which ended with the Lord's Prayer." "Then followed another psalm much shorter than the first, and all was closed with a prayer, shorter also than the former."*

* Nichols' "Literary Anecdotes," IX. 441.

forming worship in a cathedral is quite noteworthy, and bears upon a question agitated at the present time.*

Cathedrals in those days could number amongst their Clergy not a few who united with a perfunctory discharge of official duties a life of ease and indulgence, thinking of their own aggrandizement more than the interests of that Church in which they had taken holy orders. Owing their position to the patronage of the Government, and hoping for future favours from that source, their loyalty sunk into obsequiousness, and they were prepared to render support to the policy of the party in power, whatever that policy might be. Moreover, many Bishops were chargeable with nepotism, and the best livings in a diocese often fell to the lot of the Episcopal family. Beyond cathedral precincts, practices of a similar description prevailed. Pluralities and non-residence were the order of the day, and London, Bath, or Tunbridge frequently enjoyed the presence of incumbents who were rarely seen in their own parishes. Livings were bought and sold in a manner which would not be tolerated in our time, and a clergyman advertised for "a curacy in a good sporting country, where the duty was light and the neighbourhood convivial." †

* See *Times* newspaper for September, 1880, for correspondence on Nonconformist services in Cathedrals and Churches.

† Arthur Young, "Travels in France, 1789," 543.

In an account of the Archdeaconry of Canterbury in Archbishop Herring's time (1747-1757)—MSS. Lambeth Library, 1138—several churches are mentioned as having service once a month, others once a fortnight. In one case it is said of the incumbent—"He is in bad circumstances, often hides; when he is at home he serves once a day." Generally there were services twice a day.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE history of the English Episcopal Church in relation to the appointment of Bishops in our Colonial dependencies leads us for a while across the Atlantic. The war of American Independence broke out in 1775, and as the fight at Lexington, and the battle on Bunker's Hill were reported on this side the Atlantic, intense excitement arose amongst Englishmen, concerned for the integrity of the empire. Not only in its political issues, but in its ecclesiastical complications, it interested a great number of persons. The American Episcopal Church was a branch of the English Establishment. The Book of Common Prayer was read from the time of the introduction of religion into Virginia, on the shores of Chesapeake Bay, as on the banks of the Thames; for the terms of the Charter in 1606—granted to a colony formed there by Episcopalians—prescribed that in the new settlement, “the true word and service of God should be preached, planted, and used, according to the rites and doctrines of the Church of England.” This settlement, like other colonies under the English Crown, came within the capacious boundaries of the Metropolitan See of London; and ecclesiastical authority on the part of the mother country, and submission on the part of the

daughter state on the other side of the Atlantic continued until the outbreak of hostilities between them. The Virginian Clergy were intensely loyal ; a circumstance which brought them into collision with Revolutionary authorities. The Republic, born out of the struggle, was inspired with a passion for religious liberty, and knew no difference between Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, and other bodies ; but Episcopalians, whether clerical or lay, exposed themselves to serious consequences, by assuming a position which opposed the new Government. If Monarchism could not tolerate Republicanism, neither could Republicanism tolerate the antagonism of monarchical champions. The resisting Clergy, therefore, had to suffer what they considered persecution for political acts ; though power on the part of the new rulers seems to have been considerably used. When soldiers marched into a church where there officiated a pious Episcopalian,—who had said “it was in the power of Washington to close the church, but not to make the Clergy relinquish their duty,” and who fearlessly continued service in the presence of armed men,—no violence followed ; firmness saved the assembly from further wrong. Washington was an Episcopalian, and so was Jefferson ;* and when the

* Bishop Wilberforce (in his “American Church,” 175), calls him “the Deist Jefferson,” but I have before me an autograph letter by Jefferson, dated August 10, 1823, in which replying to some application for pecuniary help, he says, “The principle that every religious sect is to maintain its own teachers and institutions is too reasonable and too well established in our country to need justification. I have been from my infancy a member of the Episcopalian Church, and to that I owe and make my contributions. Were I to go beyond that limit in favour of any other sectarian institution I should be equally bound to do so for every other ; and their number is beyond the faculties of any individual. I believe therefore that in this, as in every other case, everything

war was over, and American independence established, they continued in the same religious profession as before ; but the Revolution snapped the bond between Episcopalianism on the one side of the water and Episcopalianism on the other. The Church of Virginia no longer remained part of the great London diocese, and it became necessary when peace returned, that some arrangements should be made to produce and maintain a consistent organic independence in that and other colonies, where Episcopalianism rooted itself. It should be added that as the Episcopal Church in America was severed from the mother Church in England ; so also it was severed from State ties in its own land. This was accomplished not without a struggle. "It gave rise," says Jefferson, "to the severest contests in which I have ever been engaged." But there was moderation in the beginning, at least on the side of the popular party ; for, whilst Non-Episcopalians were exempted from contributing to Episcopalian Church funds—to the Clergy were secured arrears of salary with their glebes, their plate, their buildings, and their books. The Episcopalian Clergy were thrown, like other Clergy, upon the voluntary principle. In this respect a Virginian rector came to be on the same footing as a New York Presbyterian, or a Boston Congregationalist ; but permission to retain ecclesiastical property on the same terms as before, came to be revoked ; and so at length thorough equality was established.

After the close of the American war, and the establishment be better conducted if left to those immediately interested. On these grounds I trust that your candour will excuse my returning the enclosed paper without my subscription ; and that you will accept the assurance of my great personal respect and esteem.

—TH. JEFFERSON."

lishment of Independence, the Episcopalians of that country made a great effort to organize their Church upon the principles to which they were attached. A meeting of Episcopalians was held in 1783, at New York, and they elected Dr. Seabury to the episcopal office. He sailed to England to obtain consecration, but difficulties at once made their appearance. Without an Act of Parliament, it was said, the Bishops could not consecrate an American subject; for no subject of a foreign state could take the oath of allegiance, and that was essential for consecration in this country. One door was open. Though consecration was impossible in England, where Episcopacy is part of the State, it was not impossible in Scotland where it is unestablished. Independently of legal obstacles on this side the Tweed, there were other considerations to recommend an application to Bishops on the other side. The recent war had exasperated the States against England. "From the Churches of England and Ireland," said the son of Bishop Berkeley, who had lived in America, "she will not now receive the episcopate; if she might, I am persuaded that many of her sons would joyfully receive Bishops from Scotland." "A Bishop," he had remarked just before, "consecrated by the English or Irish Church, would find considerably stronger prejudices against him in the revolted colonies, than would one who had been called to the highest order by a Bishop or Bishops of the Scotch Church—our Bishops, and those of Ireland, having been nominated by a sovereign, against whom the colonists have rebelled, and whom you have never recognized."* Dr. Seabury therefore turned his

* Wilberforce's "American Church," 198, 199. (Seabury's MSS.)

thoughts to Scotland. The Bishops there were applied to, and they regarded the application with favour, but new difficulties arose ; it was said the scheme was contrary to the judgment of the two English Archbishops. This turned out to be an overstatement ; they would not sanction nor would they oppose the contemplated step. The ceremony, therefore, was performed at Aberdeen, in November, 1784, by the Bishops of Aberdeen, Ross, and Moray. After consecration, Dr. Seabury signed, on behalf of his American brethren, articles of friendship between the sister Churches.

But this did not satisfy all American Episcopalians. They wished to obtain clerical orders from Canterbury. The Episcopal Convention forwarded an address to the Primate, and after a time the Archbishop expressed a readiness, in which his brethren shared, to grant episcopal succession to the American Church, provided the ecclesiastical constitution adopted was worthy of approval. Some alterations had been made by the Convention in the Liturgy, some things had been omitted, and some things had been left to the option of the Clergy. Concessions were made on both sides, and it was finally arranged that the Apostles' Creed should be left untouched ; that the Nicene Creed should remain ; and that the use of the Athanasian symbol should be left to the discretion of the Clergy. Some other changes were allowed, and the King approving of the arrangement, a consecration of American Bishops took place in the chapel of the Archbishop of Canterbury, on the 4th of February, 1787.

The same year the diocese of Nova Scotia was constituted by letters patent from London, dated August the 8th. It is the oldest of British Colonial dioceses, and the first Bishop was Dr. Inglis, who had been a

missionary in New York, in connection with the Propagation Society. In Nova Scotia the condition of the Episcopalian Church at the time must have been truly deplorable. "Food I have but barely," says de la Roche, a devoted missionary of that communion, "as to raiment I have it not; I am in great distress, for I receive no additional benefits from the people here; they confer already too great a favour, in their own sense of the matter, on a Church of England minister, to countenance him by keeping in the Church."* Strong prejudices, no doubt, at the time existed against the system, and this can easily be accounted for by traditions of English Episcopacy, handed down from the Puritan fathers of the American Colonies; but patience, and devotedness to the spiritual interests of the people, in due course overcame opposition to a large extent, and a very considerable increase in the number of Episcopalians in Nova Scotia arose from the influence of American loyalists, attached to the Church of England, who fled from the United States, after the War of Independence. In a letter dated the 28th of October, 1782, the writer, a clergyman, speaks of three hundred persons who had just arrived at Annapolis, and were soon to be followed by three times that number. Halifax, also, became so thronged with refugees, mostly Episcopalians, that house rent rose to an enormous degree, and the provisions of life reached an exorbitant price.† A Bishop of the diocese, son of Dr. Inglis first appointed to the diocese, writing many years afterwards, gathered up traditions of the early Episcopalian settlers. "I have lately been at Shelburne, where nearly ten thousand of them,

* Hawkins' "Missions of the Church of England," 359.

† Ibid., 372.

chiefly from New York, and comprising many of my father's parishioners, attracted by the beauty and security of a most noble harbour, were tempted to plant themselves, regardless of the important want of any country in the neighbourhood fit for cultivation. Their means were soon exhausted in building a spacious town, at great expense, and vainly contending against indomitable rocks, and in a few years the place was reduced to a few hundred families. Many of them returned to their native country, and a large portion of them were reduced to poverty. . . . Some few of the first emigrants are still living. I visited these aged members of the Church. They told me that, on their first arrival, lines of women could be seen sitting on the rocks of the shore, and weeping at their altered condition. It is a happy circumstance that the church, built soon after the arrival of the settlers, and consecrated by my father in 1789, has been carefully preserved, and is in excellent condition." *

An increase of population favourably disposed towards Episcopacy at once increased the responsibilities of those who were pledged to sustain the mission, and encouraged the spirit of faith and hope ; a circumstance to which, in an anniversary sermon, before the Propagation Society for 1784, Dr. Butler, Bishop of Oxford, referred by saying :—" An infant Church is rising under the favour and protection of the Government in Nova Scotia ; and it is of a singular description, consisting of honourable exiles under the pastoral care of fellow sufferers." †

Six years after the formation of the Bishopric of Nova Scotia, that of Quebec was created by letters

* Hawkins' "Missions of the Church of England," 373.

† Ibid., 374.

patent. Secker said, in 1776, that George III. had repeatedly expressed himself in favour of American Episcopates, and had promised a Protestant Bishop should be sent to Quebec, where there was a popish one, and where there were few Dissenters to take offence.* That Dissenters did take offence is true; but the offence, if excusable on grounds adverted to already, was also unjustifiable, and partook of that very exclusiveness to which the very existence of Dissent was a standing protest. In 1793, Quebec and other Canadian towns were supplied with all the institutions and privileges which conscientious convictions led Episcopalians to desire.

Looking at the extent of our colonial empire at the close of the last century, it is remarkable that no more dioceses were instituted at that time. Nova Scotia and Quebec were the only English Episcopal folds existing abroad, down to so late a period as 1814, when the See of Calcutta was created. Ten years more elapsed before Jamaica became a Bishopric. Since then a large number of Colonial Diocesans have been appointed, amounting, in 1877, altogether to sixty-six.

It may be added that the establishment of American Independence put an end to the operations of the Propagation Society in that part of the world, which now became the United States. The termination of missionary relationship between the two countries was marked by a graceful acknowledgment on the part of the Clerical and Lay Delegates assembled in the New Republic in 1785. "All the Bishops of England, with other distinguished characters, as well ecclesiastical as civil, have concurred in forming and carrying on the

* Hawkins, 393.

benevolent views of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts ; a society to whom, under God, the prosperity of our Church is in an eminent degree to be ascribed. It is our earnest wish to be permitted to make, through your Lordships, this just acknowledgment to that venerable society."* The Bishopric of Connecticut then existed alone ; in 1787 arose the Bishopric of Pennsylvania, and in 1875 the American Bishoprics reached the number of fifty-nine.

Relieved from responsibilities in so wide a field, the society concentrated their efforts upon Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia, and soon afterwards upon Canada and New Brunswick. Coincident with this change in the society's labours was a slight effort in Sierra Leone after its acquisition by the British Crown in 1787. An itinerant missionary had been sent there in 1752. A native, ordained in England, arrived on the Gold Coast in 1765, and a catechist reached Sierra Leone in 1787. No Bishopric was established there until 1850.

From the commencement, the society had been charged with the care of British "factories beyond the seas," in addition to the colonies. After religious assistance had been rendered to English residents in Amsterdam and Moscow,† a trust fund originated in 1761 for the benefit of a college at Debretzen in Hungary ; and in 1768 another fund was collected by the authority of a Royal Letter, in aid of the Vaudois

* Hawkins, 345.

† There were factories at Moscow and Archangel, "first fruits of the otherwise abortive effort made by the fleet of Edward VI. to discover the rich territories of Cathay." The services of the Church in these places were conducted by a chaplain, at first in a private dwelling, afterwards in a Church on ground given by the Russian Emperor. (Anderson, III. 78.)

Churches in Piedmont. After these visits abroad, in following out Episcopalian arrangements in English colonies and factories, we return home to notice the character and labours of certain distinguished clergymen.

CHAPTER IX.

IN the obscure parish of Hatton in Warwickshire, lived one of the most learned and able men of his age, Dr. Parr. He settled there in 1786. His liberal politics, perhaps, stood in the way of his promotion under a Tory Government, and the utmost preferment he obtained was a Prebendal stall in St. Paul's Cathedral. Perhaps his social peculiarities contributed to hinder his rise any further, inasmuch as, whilst benevolent and kindly to attached friends, he cherished intense antipathies to certain persons. He appears to have been a man of singular eccentricity. His dislike to Bishop Hurd amounted to a mania; and to be avenged on him, for what reason is not apparent, he republished "*Tracts by Warburton and a Warburtonian*,"—though he thereby injured the reputation of the very man whom he professed to admire. His classical learning was the foundation of his fame; and stories of his wit threw around him a brilliant halo. An ardent Whig, opposed to the Slave Trade and Test Act, an advocate for Catholic Emancipation and the political rights of Dissenters, he had a strong aversion to Methodists, and betrayed want of sympathy in efforts for the revival of religion.

In the third generation of the century, two other

clerical names appear of literary renown, Joseph and Thomas Warton. Joseph was Master of Winchester School, and published an "Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope," in which he laid down a distinction between the poetry of Reason and the poetry of Fancy, maintaining a decided preference for the latter, and thereby establishing a school of thought which has had a powerful influence on English literature. He obtained the Rectory of Clapham, where he went to live after resigning his post at Winchester. Besides his work on Pope, he edited and translated Virgil, and proved himself an eminent Latin scholar. His brother held the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford, and distinguished himself by translations of the Greek Anthology; and by Dissertations on Bucolic Verse, prefixed to an edition of Theocritus. But these and several other classical publications are lost in the celebrity of the work entitled "History of English Poetry," which, in spite of its discursive character and tedious minuteness, remains a text-book for students on the subject to which it relates. He had a small living in Oxfordshire, and another in Somersetshire, and in preaching, as we are told, he confined himself mostly to two sermons, one of which was written by his father, Thomas Warton, who preceded his son in the Oxford professorship, the other a printed discourse, altered here and there with the preacher's pen. He had no liking either for divinity or for parish duties; and in what we learn respecting the brothers, we miss, even more than in the case of Parr, qualities essential to the Christian ministry. Archdeacon Coxe is a literary name belonging to the same period, known in connection with a number of works, including History, Travels and Discoveries, but associated with no pub-

lication, that I remember, bearing on the duties of his sacred office.

It is difficult to connect the clerical poet, George Crabbe, with any particular spot except Aldborough, in Suffolk—where he entered the world and held his first curacy—and Trowbridge, in Wilts, where he occupied his last preferment. In the course of a singularly romantic and instructive life, he passed from place to place, a pilgrim though not a stranger on the earth. He owed no debt to either University, being a self-taught man; but his Biography furnishes an example of diligent study from beginning to end. His poetry is a reflection of what he met with in his pastoral course. The village, the parish workhouse, the honest rustics, even the thieves and smugglers whom he so livingly delineates, are scenes and characters he had met with; and while they evince his gifts and cultivated taste, they indicate the kind of people amongst whom the lot of a country minister in those days was thrown, and the unpromising materials on which Providence sent him to execute his beneficent mission. Very gratifying is it to recognize, in this instance, a combination of literary activity with ministerial conscientiousness. Crabbe discharged his duties so as to win the respect and love of his parishioners. Gentleness and benevolence were his characteristics. He brought upon him the blessing of those that were ready to perish, and made the widow's heart to sing for joy.

A different kind of clergyman was Gilbert White, Fellow of Oriel, and inhabitant of Selborne, of whom it is remarked that, "Being of an unambitious temper, and strongly attached to the charms of rural scenery, he early fixed his residence in his native village, where

he spent the greater part of his life in literary occupations, and especially in the study of nature." "Though several occasions offered of settling upon a College living, he could never persuade himself to quit the beloved spot, which was indeed a peculiarly happy situation for an observer." He undertook no parochial duties, and therefore is to be regarded as a clergyman in little more than name; but the leisure he had at command, added to his education, enabled him to produce one of the most charming books in the English language. We see him rambling over chalky downs, noting changes in the weather; remarking how "the turtle" "and the swallow observe the time of their coming;" verifying how "the ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer;" in short, gathering from creation proofs of intelligent design and loving care: thus affording food for pious thought, and providing instruction and amusement for after generations.

These authors are well known. Names less familiar occur in literary histories, showing how much zeal members of the order manifested in intellectual pursuits, and the production of works corresponding with certain chosen lines of literary labour. But I now pass over to another class, those who devoted themselves to biblical and theological studies, and amongst them, besides Bishops and dignitaries already noticed, we meet with others not to be dismissed without remark. Kennicott was an Oxford man, Fellow of Exeter, Canon of Christchurch, and Radcliffe Librarian. He early devoted himself to the study of Hebrew, and attained to unrivalled distinction in that department of letters. The text of the Old Testament was his subject of examination. Its absolute integrity, as it then

stood, idly maintained by some, he could not for a moment admit ; and though he alarmed timid scholars, he boldly advanced along his chosen path. He catalogued at first a hundred MSS., preserved in Oxford, Cambridge, and London ; and then, by the aid of foreigners, collated besides more than six hundred Hebrew and sixteen Samaritan copies. It is easy for modern scholars, with accumulated advantages since his time, to find fault with what Kennicott has done ; but it must be remembered that he was a pioneer in new regions, that he had unparalleled difficulties to overcome, and that the defects of his edition detract not from the merit displayed in the undertaking. Blayney was Regius Professor of Hebrew in the same University, and reached that office soon after Kennicott's death. Before that time, walking in the footsteps of his contemporary, he took pains to correct the printing of the English version issued in 1769. But his best known labours are his translation of Jeremiah and Zechariah. His life was devoted to critical toils ; and those who do not now read his books are benefited by his influence upon more popular authors.

The theologians who claim attention are numerous. From amongst them two may be selected. Archdeacon Paley occupies a foremost rank. "My son," said his father, "is now gone to College. He'll turn out a great man, very great indeed. I'm certain of it ; for he has by far the clearest head I ever met with in my life." Few parents have so correctly prognosticated their children's fortunes. After a fit of slothfulness, this young man at Cambridge out-distanced competitors, and became the senior wrangler of his year. In his parochial life as a Cumberland vicar, and in his more dignified position as Prebendary and Arch-

deacon, finally as Rector of Bishop Wearmouth, he acted the part of a country gentleman. Farming and angling were his great amusement. In the former employment he had no success, only lost money; in the latter he was "an incorrigible disciple of Izaak Walton." In a portrait by Romney, he appears with a fisherman's rod, and from this point of view he represented a good many contemporary clergymen; but his mind was mainly given to higher things. He is less valued and less read than he used to be; but as a writer on what are called "Evidences," he for a long time took the lead, and his works were text-books in that department of study. They were appealed to for proofs of intelligent design in creation; for proofs of the historical truthfulness of the New Testament; and for proofs of the genuineness of St. Paul's Epistles. In his "Natural Theology," with more originality of style than of substance, he trod in the steps of Ray and Derham, leaving more to be done in the way of correcting and supplementing their arguments; his historical materials for the "Evidences of Christianity," he collected from Lardner; but in his "*Horæ Paulinæ*," he struck out a new line, except that in some respects he had been anticipated by Biscoe in his "History of the Acts." The age for original defences of Scripture had passed away before Paley's time. Conybeare, Lardner, Warburton, Butler, and other writers on Evidence belong to the first sixty years of the eighteenth century. But though in matter, except as author of "*Horæ Paulinæ*," Paley may not have much claim to originality, his manner and style are his own, and they lay hold of his readers with unprecedented interest and force. Of his "Moral Philosophy" it has been well said, if he had confined himself to practical

views he would have deserved universal praise ; but unfortunately he laid down shallow utilitarian principles, to which grave objections have been justly taken. Another Cambridge scholar, less known, deserves to be mentioned with honour, Dr. John Hey, Norrisian Professor of Divinity. In his "Lectures,"—a work worth careful study—he presents, together with orthodox opinions, a candid examination of difficulties, and at the same time affords a vast amount of valuable information and original remark. He was a man of large and liberal culture, with considerable breadth of view, and had the art of throwing side lights, in a curious way, upon topics which he wished to handle. The shrewd and pregnant observations of this Divine will abundantly repay the student's attentive perusal.

The so-called orthodox theologians of that age had no sympathy with Puritans or Calvinists ; though it is worth a remark, that Horsley takes opportunities for referring to the Genevan reformer as a critic of lofty excellence. Nor can they be said to walk in the steps of Anglo-Catholics. They were not followers of Laud, nor disciples of Thorndike, nor imitators of Pearson, nor were they in full accordance with Bull. The doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Atonement, they upheld ; but Justification by Faith in the Lutheran sense, they did not accept, or, if they did, it was in some modified way, and ideas on the subject are by no means prominent in their writings. Neither does the doctrine of Regeneration appear in their works, except as involved in the baptismal rite, whilst the work of the Holy Ghost is resolved chiefly, if not entirely, into the Inspiration of the Scriptures, and such influences as are conceived to flow through

sacramental channels. There was for the most part in the prevalent style of teaching much that is cold, hard, and dry. Truths were wrought out in frost, not in fire. The writings of the period do not inspire even when they instruct; if they illuminate the intellect they chill the heart. This undoubtedly is the case in general, yet some glow is caught in the reasonings of Horsley; and Paley, in his sermons, is not without feeling. The theological literature of the third generation is not so brilliant as that of earlier days. The proverbial judiciousness of Hooker, the golden eloquence of Taylor, the patristic learning of Bull, the ecclesiastical lore of Bingham, the profound thoughtfulness of Butler, and the daring originality of Warburton found nothing to equal them during the latter decades of the eighteenth century. It was not to be expected; yet Watson and Horsley, Parr and Paley, were shining lights; and besides them, there were authors, expositors and instructors, not their equals in mental power, but their superiors in spiritual usefulness.

The transition is easy from clergymen who were authors to others who made themselves known chiefly, if not entirely, by what they did in the pulpit and the parish; and no doubt we find the representative of a considerable class in a certain John Duncombe of St. John's, Soho, who is described as a popular and admired preacher, equally satisfied with a country parish or a city cathedral.*

Religious worship in parish churches was performed during this period in the accustomed manner. Morning and evening prayer was read in most places every Sunday; but in some agricultural districts worship

* Nichols' "Anecdotes," VIII. 73.

did not occur more than once a week, or once a fortnight, or even once a month. No doubt, clerical duties were discharged, in many cases, after a perfunctory and even negligent fashion, for the characters of incumbents and their curates are painted by contemporary authors in anything but complimentary colours. It is to be observed, however, that portraits of the grosser kind, such as had been painted at an earlier period, disappear after the middle of the century, yet Cowper speaks of "a cassocked huntsman and a fiddling priest;" and of the clergyman cheating "the eyes of gallery critics with a thousand arts," and who could in fifteen minutes "huddle up their work, and with a well-bred whisper close the scene." This may be thought severe; but there is no historical ground on which it can be pronounced unjust. Much more serious charges against the Clergy were brought by one of their own number, who, though he rebuts indiscriminate accusations, yet poured down on the profession these most damaging sentences:—

"I am sorry to be obliged to confess that the serious part of mankind have long had just reason to express their abhorrence at the frequent occurrence of the *professed clerical libertine*." "The public have long remarked with indignation that some of the most distinguished coxcombs, drunkards, debauchers, and gamblers who figure at the watering places, and all places of public resort, are young men of the sacerdotal order."

But there is another and very different clerical division requiring more particular notice. The Evangelical leaders of theology were disciples of the Puritans. The doctrines of Redemption, of Justification by Faith, of the Work of the Holy Spirit, were zealously

embraced. The wells, next to those of the Bible, whence the Evangelicals drew their inspiration, were not Patristic, not Anglo-Catholic ; but Protestant works of the sixteenth, and Nonconformist works of the seventeenth century. The Homilies were their delight. They appealed to them in proof of their own distinctive theology ; certain Articles they regarded with great satisfaction, especially the Seventeenth ; but parts of the Church formularies were not quite to their taste. The Baptismal and Burial Services presented difficulties, but they found ways of bringing them into harmony with their convictions. Let us look at the men themselves. I pass over other names and fix upon the following : Venn, Romaine, Newton, Scott, and Cecil.

Henry Venn, Vicar of Huddersfield, and afterwards Rector of Yelling in Huntingdonshire, was descended from a line of ancestors in holy orders. His father was Richard Venn, a staunch opponent of the latitudinarian Dr. Rundle, whose aspirations after a bishopric in the time of George II. were so successfully thwarted. Henry was as orthodox as his father on the main points taught in the creeds, but he went beyond the creeds in the doctrines which, as a writer and a preacher, he inculcated through a long ministerial life. In early days he wrote a work which brought him into notice, and which is the corner stone of his fame as a theologian. "The Whole Duty of Man" was a favourite book with orthodox people in the latter part of the seventeenth century ; its defects, Henry Venn endeavoured to supply by publishing "The Complete Duty of Man." This new book inculcated evangelical truth, as well as Christian morality, and supplied powerful motives to the proper conduct

of life. Passing from the one volume to the other, we cross the boundary line between the hemispheres of Anglicanism, and Puritanism. Venn's book was by a large class denounced and ridiculed as methodistical ; by another it was praised as Scriptural and edifying. The charm of the work is that it sprung from the heart. It was the fruit of spiritual experience, in this respect resembling the writings of Martin Luther and John Wesley.

William Romaine, author of popular works on the subject of Faith, preached at St. Dunstan's, and St. George's, Hanover Square ; afterwards at St. Andrew's and St. Anne's, Blackfriars. On one occasion the Earl of Northampton rebuked the parishioners for complaining of the inconvenience occasioned by the rector's popularity, observing that they bore with patience crowded ball-rooms and play-houses. "If," he said, "the power to attract be imputed as matter of admiration to Garrick, why should it be urged as a crime against Romaine ? Shall excellence be considered exceptionable only in Divine things ?" Romaine was strongly opposed by some who disapproved of his sentiments, and was soon turned out of St. George's Church ; after this the Countess of Huntingdon made him her chaplain, in which office he preached in her drawing-room to the nobility, in her kitchen to the poor. Settled at length, as Rector of St. Andrew's and St. Anne's, this eminent minister—of whom it has been said that he was a diamond, rough often, but very pointed, and that the more he was broken by years the more he appeared to shine—pursued uninterruptedly his edifying ministrations till the time of his death in 1795.

The ministry of John Newton cannot be understood

without reference to his personal history. His father had been educated in Spain, where he imbibed the national haughtiness of spirit and severity of character. It would seem as if paternal rigour checked the growth of affections which had begun to spring up under the tender culture of a mother's love. The discipline of a harsh schoolmaster completed the mischief. Religious impressions came and went like gleams of sunshine, till, through the reading of Shaftesbury's works, and the influence of a person who expounded and enforced their real meaning, Newton became an infidel. Other temptations, in addition to these, made him a profligate. He was of a thoroughly roving disposition, and early showed a desire for the sea. At twenty years of age we find him a sailor, distinguished by his ready wit, bold character, and abandoned conduct. In the midst of a storm, Newton was brought to his senses, and landed on the coast of Ireland a changed man. He had a wonderful dream, in which he received from a stranger a mystic ring, the pledge of safety and peace. He foolishly dropped it in the sea, through the subtle temptation of an enemy, to have it restored by one who promised thenceforth to keep it for him. Newton interpreted the ring to mean his own personal salvation, which could be secured to the end only by the gracious care of God. An experience so rich as his was not to be lost. The Church needed the benefit of his wisdom. He felt an inward call, and obeyed it. After some delay and difficulty, he chose the ministry of the Church of England ; and was ordained in 1764, being then in his thirty-ninth year. The Earl of Dartmouth presented him to the Vicarage of Olney. Fifteen years afterwards, Mr. Thornton gave him the living of St. Mary Woolnoth, and St. Mary Woolchurch Haw,

Lombard Street. As a preacher, not gifted with eloquence, but full of that rare spiritual power, which through deep experience touches men's hearts, when expressed in simple straightforward language, this converted sailor made an astonishing impression both on the humble townsfolk of Olney and the rich merchants of Lombard Street. Dr. Dibdin, when a boy, heard Newton preach his wife's funeral sermon at St. Mary Woolnoth, and describes him as having a tremulous voice, and as wearing the "costume of the full bottomed wig." "He spoke at first feebly and leisurely, but as he warmed, his ideas and periods seemed mutually to enlarge; the tears trickled down his cheeks, and his action and expression were at times quite out of the ordinary course of things. It was the '*mens agitans molem et magno se corpore miscens*.'" In fact the preacher was one with his discourse. To this day I have not forgotten his text, Hab. iii. 17, 18: 'Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' Newton always preached extemporaneously."*

It is true of John Newton, and of almost all the leading Evangelicals, that they were, in themselves, in their personal influence, in their characters, habits, and life, more than can be fully estimated by printed copies of discourses, or by accurate reports of conversation; they were *felt* to be *spiritual* powers, wherever they moved. With some men we cannot talk for ten minutes without feeling their superiority. So it was with these leaders, who, though not highly

* "Reminiscences of a Literary Life."

intellectual, had a spiritual superiority which was confessed by all sorts of people who came within the circle of their acquaintanceship. John Newton was a great talker. Olney Vicarage, having nothing of elegance, but much of comfort, was the scene of abundant pleasurable intercourse. The gifted and gentle author of the "Task," at once so solitary and yet so social, would oft, when weighed down with sorrowful musings in his garden and summer-house, lift the latch of the little gate which opened into the paddock adjoining the vicarage garden, to be met, as he stepped across, by the loving friend, who stood watching his arrival, ready, with cordial grasp, to shake his hand. Thomas Scott, then young and inquisitive, feeling his way into the paths of truth, would every now and then drive over from Ravenstone, sure to meet from neighbour Newton a hearty welcome, and a patient consideration of doubts and difficulties on doctrinal points. Bull also, the Dissenting minister of Newport Pagnell, a man of wit and scholarship, not seldom crossed the bridge which spans the Ouse "with wearisome but needful length," to spend a few hours of edifying chat with the catholic-hearted vicar. Olney prepared Newton for London, and in his house, first at Hoxton and then in Coleman Street, he extended the conversational influence which had been felt to be so gracious at Olney Vicarage. Dryden filled the critic's throne at Will's Coffee-house, Russell Street, and thither came wits and poets to do homage, and receive judgment at his lips; Johnson still more illustriously figured in the literary club which assembled at the Turk's Head, Soho; but if Newton's humble reunions might be scorned by many, they had a higher end and were of nobler mark. "I trust," said he, "the members are all

of the Royal family, and the King himself condescends to meet us." Numerous theological and religious books were written by Newton's pen; through his "Letters" he will speak to unborn generations, in kindly Christian tones, and by the "Olney Hymns" continue to inspire and elevate English worship in every portion of the globe.

Thomas Scott led a different life. He had sooner applied himself to study, he had a stronger understanding, but he was deficient in the sunny cheerfulness which gave a touch of grace and beauty to the rough son of Neptune. Scott speaks of himself as having been morose and proud, and it would seem that he never became a man of winning ways. He had also been sceptical, but his acquaintance with Newton formed the turning point of his history. He had heard of his fame, went to hear him preach, disliked the sermon, thought it was personal, went home, wrote a letter challenging his neighbour to a theological controversy, but all this ended in a victory on the part of the Olney vicar over his pugnacious brother. Scott now set himself to pray and read his Bible, aided only by two or three books which it is curious to notice:—Locke's "Essay on the Reasonableness of Christianity;" Burnet's "Pastoral Care;" Soame Jenyns' "Internal Evidences;" Dr. Clarke on "The Trinity;" and Law's "Serious Call." His doubts vanished, and for the rest of his life he avowed himself a staunch Evangelical. The process of his conversion is given in his "Force of Truth," the most popular of his works. He had been full of prejudice, and had been brought to conclusions which he knew would expose himself to contempt and ridicule; these of all things, with his natural disposition, he was least able to bear. After such a course he

concluded that it was impossible he should be "delivered up to the teaching of the father of lies." Whatever may be thought of such a story, it is quite certain, that a man so convinced would utter his convictions with no little sincerity and earnestness. Scott's great power lay outside the pulpit, and it consisted chiefly in qualifications as a controversialist and an expositor. He defended Evangelical opinions against the attacks of the Bishop of Lincoln, he expounded them with much clearness in his "Essays," and in other works ; but his great work is his "Commentary." He was a stranger to the lights of modern criticism, he was defective in accurate scholarship, his reading was limited, of some important branches of critical and theological study he was ignorant ; but his learning, of an old-fashioned kind, has been unfairly depreciated, and his clear common sense in the study of the Bible, a rare and invaluable quality, is often overlooked by those who pride themselves on the riches of modern erudition. At all events his Commentary, next to that of Matthew Henry, was long the most popular in English literature. After its publication, Evangelical clergymen, when choosing a text, turned to see what Scott had to say ; and so for half a century at least, he was a guide for preachers in thousands of English pulpits. It adds to the interest of the work to remember the difficulties under which it was produced. Not in an academic bower, not in a cloistered study, not surrounded by a rich library, not in correspondence with great scholars, not in wealth, or even competence ; but in poverty, in a small parsonage, with scantily filled shelves, surrounded by his family, sometimes having to rock the cradle whilst he used his pen, did the Commentator carry on his solitary and ill-remunerated toils.

Several chapels were built in London during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Their architectural appearance did not invite strangers to enter, and the interior, if not a hindrance, certainly was no help to devotion. Built with plain brick walls, shapeless windows, ugly roofs and tasteless entrances, they presented inside deep galleries, tall pews, and a wide aisle in the middle, blocked up by rows of uncomfortable benches for the poor. There stood a pulpit with a huge sounding board, just in front of the communion table, hiding the Lord's Prayer, the Belief, and the Ten Commandments. It rose pagoda-like in distinct stories,—three desks, one for the clerk, one for the reader, and one for the preacher. Immense brass chandeliers, studded with candles, hung from the ceiling, and the upholstery of the place was most abundant. The preacher leaned over a superb cushion, under which were violet hangings, fringed with gold, and the letters I. H. S. The hearers sat in green-lined boxes, on well-stuffed seats, with a vast apparatus of hassocks. Select corners were separated from other parts by heavy curtains, where the privileged could worship unobserved. These chapels, in fashionable quarters, were frequented by the rich and the respectable. Carriages, with stylishly-dressed ladies and gentlemen, attended by servants in livery, swept up proudly to the door; and people attracted by a popular preacher, but not entitled to sittings in the edifice, had to fee a beadle or a female attendant, who thereupon politely conducted them to a pew. St. John's, Bedford Row, was a building of this description. Richard Cecil became Incumbent in 1780; and he set resolutely to work to gather a congregation, the chapel being almost empty when he took it. He made alterations in the

mode of conducting worship, and abolishing fees to pew-openers, he enjoined upon them the duty of treating strangers with courtesy. By these and other more efficacious means the congregation was increased. There was no flow in Cecil's oratory, nothing limp in his style, his words bubbled out in bursts; but wisdom and sagacity, conjoined with Evangelical sentiment, derived additional effect from the preacher's manly manner, his intense earnestness, and his manifest desire to save souls; suffering, as he did, from delicate health, he sometimes appeared as if standing on the threshold of another world. Not merely as a preacher, but as a man of conversational power and social influence, he promoted religious objects in the city and in the neighbourhood. Bedford Row was frequented by many religious celebrities. Wilberforce might often be seen there. He took Pitt to hear the Evangelical preacher, but his doctrines were unintelligible to the great statesman. Bacon, the sculptor, was a regular attendant, whose life, written by his pastor, shows how piety and art were blended in his character. Amongst the devout women who, in Cecil's time or soon afterwards, worshipped at Bedford Row, was a lady named Hawks, eminent for her spiritual zeal; she was much visited by young clergymen and others, whom she instructed and animated by her lively religious conversation. Like the Countess of Huntingdon, she was one of those pious ladies who in the Church of Rome would have received the honour of canonization. Cecil left Bedford Row and became Rector of Chobham, and wherever he laboured, he transformed and edified numbers in his congregation, who in after life revered his name, and spoke of Richard Cecil as their "spiritual father."

Another Evangelical demands a passing notice on rather different grounds. Joseph Milner was Minister of the High Church at Hull, and Master of the Endowed Grammar School there. He had been "Orthodox" before he became "Evangelical;" and having made his way through doubts and difficulties, the opinions he embraced became indelibly burnt into his mind. His preaching was of the same stamp with that of Newton and Scott, and his memory as a preacher remains with honour in the famous Yorkshire port. But as an author rather than as a clergyman he promoted the cause with which he stood identified. Through his "*History of the Church*," he made a deep impression upon contemporary students in harmony with his religious views; by the same means he has made himself best known to posterity. He formed a theological purpose in writing the work; he wished to exhibit in unbroken concatenation the existence of Evangelical sentiments, from the time of the Apostles to the time of the Reformation. Lovingly does he dilate on the writings of St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, and St. Bernard. Almost everything in Church History is put out of sight except this chain of testimony, and whatever in surrounding circumstances and opinions would seem to place in bolder relief the author's principles. Hence Milner's work is more a theological treatise than anything else; and it is, no doubt, this fact which gave it such a value in the eyes of his clerical brethren. It needs scarcely be said, the publication is differently estimated by students of a different school.

Looking at the Evangelical party from a judicial point of view, one must acknowledge their defects. They were destitute of a true appreciation of the

beautiful in literature and art; they were indifferent to "some of the causes by which Evangelical religion has been rendered unacceptable to persons of cultivated taste;"* they had a dialect of their own, liable to be misunderstood by those not in sympathy with their convictions; they were sometimes intolerant of opinions not so diverse from their own as they supposed; and they went so far as to question the Christianity of men devout and useful, who adopted different views, or even a different phraseology. There were defects in their theology. Calvinistic one-sidedness pushed into the background adequate views of human responsibility, and sometimes they dangerously treated Christian experience. But what they lost in breadth they found in depth. Their convictions were full of living power, and moved their whole being, making them incisive in speech and bold in effort. They had no half-and-half ways of talking about religion, so as to leave it doubtful what they meant. Often offensive, they were never obscure. Their spirituality, zeal, love, and Gospel earnestness were as clear as day; and multitudes who did not care about literature, art, scientific theology, or ecclesiastical questions, saw the light and felt the heat of their popular ministrations. They addressed themselves not to the educated and polite but to the masses, and the common people heard them gladly. Then their disinterestedness was conspicuous. Nobody can compare the memoirs of Bishop Newton and others with the lives of the men I have just mentioned, without feeling the wonderful difference between the two classes in this respect. One was engrossed in hunting after Church preferment; the other did not care for it a straw. People in the

* See Foster's Essay on that subject.

eighteenth century were struck with the contrast, and were influenced accordingly. The Evangelicals were denounced as Methodists, but it does not appear that the men I have described owed their conversion to methodistical influences. They were none of them led to change their opinions and alter their lives through the preaching and writing of Wesley or Whitefield. They might receive spiritual impulses in their ministry from the lives and labours of these modern apostles. Newton and Scott were friendly with Methodists, and were not shocked at the ecclesiastical irregularities of their fellow-labourers, but Cecil and others were Churchmen to the backbone, and intensely disliked the doings of the itinerants. Yet they had a large measure of methodistical zeal, methodistical unction, methodistical directness, methodistical activity, and the methodistical spirit of Christian fellowship.

Many cathedral dignitaries, many rectors and vicars firmly holding Anglican or Latitudinarian opinions, looked with suspicion or displeasure upon the writings and sermons of the Evangelical Clergy. They might not be wanting in charity or kindness, but they had a supreme aversion to all *enthusiasm*. Reasonableness and moderation they admired, and the opposites of these they thought tended to excite prejudice in the learned, ridicule in the worldly, and grief in people of sober minds. Irregularity they could not tolerate; and they complained that Evangelicals, however attached to Episcopacy and the Prayer Book, went just the way that would in the end lead folks out of the true fold into all sorts of outlandish paths and places. Such objectors decently performed their clerical duties. They attended visitations and confirmations, and they read orthodox sermons with unimpeachable propriety.

Many strove to do good to their parishioners, and won their affection; but, calling to mind what has been said of a large number, different language must be used respecting them. There can be no doubt that the chief matter with some was that of income and office; and, as I have said already, numbers who had patronage at their disposal only cared to provide for their relatives and friends.

A few clergymen between 1774 and 1776 dissented from the Church of England, and sacrificed their preferments. Theophilus Lindsey, a man of great integrity, of pure mind, and of virtuous life was of this class. He had been educated at Cambridge, and was Incumbent of Catterick, in the county of York, but not believing in the Doctrine of our Lord's Divinity, he felt compelled to become a Nonconformist. This he did, although his prospects were brilliant, for he enjoyed the patronage of the Huntingdon and Northumberland families. He went to London, without the means of subsistence, but encouraged there by sympathetic supporters, he opened a chapel in Essex Street, where he taught Unitarian principles, and adopted a form of liturgical worship, framed on a model prepared by Dr. Samuel Clarke. A clergyman named Primatt, after some hesitation, imitated Lindsey's example. Another clergyman, named Jebb, resigned a benefice in the Diocese of Norwich; and at the conclusion of 1776 two gentlemen threw up fellowships from dissatisfaction with the Prayer Book; another person is mentioned as having declined a family living on the same ground.*

On turning to the Universities we have further

* Lindsey's "Hist. View," 483; and Wakefield's "Memoirs," I. 116.

illustrations of society and religion. Gibbon gives an unfavourable account of Oxford in the year 1752. He spent, he says, fourteen of the most unprofitable months of his life at Magdalen College, and he backs his statement by citing the authority of Adam Smith, who declares the greater part of the public professors had given up even the pretence of imparting instruction. Gibbon was never summoned even to attend the ceremony of a lecture, and excepting a solitary visit to his rooms, tutor and pupil were strangers to each other. But whatever may be the truth of Gibbon's report, it must not be inferred that Oxford, throughout the reign of George III., was destitute of eminent learning; for the very College to which Gibbon belonged could boast of Horne, afterwards Bishop of Norwich, as its president from 1768 to 1791; and he was succeeded by one of the ripest scholars of the age, Dr. Routh, who lived far into the present century, and enriched our ecclesiastical literature by his "*Reliquæ Sacræ*," a work of rare erudition. There were in Oxford men of ability and attainments, training students for high office in Church and State, and they included clergymen of moral and spiritual worth; but a circumstance occurred in 1763 which shows what a strong antipathy to "Methodism" existed in certain quarters. The spirit of the Wesleys had not died out. At the time I speak of, six pious young men were there, who not only met for devotional purposes, somewhat after the method pursued thirty years before, but also ventured to preach—which the Wesleys and their companions, whilst only students, had never done. This irregularity the authorities would not tolerate, it being considered inconsistent with the Act of Uniformity, and quite contrary to University statutes.

They were accused by the Vice-Chancellor, and certain Heads of Houses, for holding methodistical tenets, and taking upon them to pray, to read and expound the Scriptures, and to sing hymns in a private house. Reference was made to their low origin, their being illiterate, their vulgar Methodism, and their coming to Oxford for the purpose of skulking into orders. One of the Heads of Houses, however, candidly observed that, as these six gentlemen were expelled for having too much religion, it would be proper to inquire into the conduct of some who had too little.

Wilberforce gives a sad account of Cambridge, for he tells us he was introduced, on the very first night of his arrival, to as licentious a set of men as can well be conceived. They drank hard, and their conversation was even worse than their lives. He was horror-struck at their conduct, and after the first year shook off all connection with them. The fellows of St. John's, his own college, made it their object to keep him idle. If ever he appeared studious they would say, "Why in the world should a man of your fortune trouble himself with fagging?"* Yet at Cambridge, towards the end of the century, there was a Fellow of King's College, Charles Simeon, who became a decided Evangelical, and endeavoured to awaken serious religious conviction, according to his own ideas of gospel truth, not only in the minds of his parishioners—he was Incumbent at Trinity Church—but in the minds of University students also. He met with much discouragement and opposition. Young men who felt the value of his teaching were known to congregate in a body, lest, if going to his church alone, they should meet with insult by the way. And what seems almost incredible, when

* "Life of Wilberforce," I. 10.

he first established Sunday evening services, in 1792, they were disturbed just in the same way as the Methodists were; gownsmen being conspicuous in these disgraceful proceedings. But with boldness and humility the good man pursued his way. He listened to what objectors had to say, was willing to learn from inferiors, and manifested towards those who differed from him a catholic spirit. When not engaged in necessary duties, he devoted himself to the instruction and training of candidates for the ministry, who crowded his rooms, and looked up to him with the greatest veneration. Diligent in work, he was liberal with his purse, and became at last a power in the University, and when he died his funeral bore witness to the truth of the text chosen for the service, "Them that honour me I will honour." He travelled up and down the country for missionary objects, attracting attention by his venerable appearance, his energetic manner, and the force of his preaching in old age. "Simeon's Skeletons" extended the preacher's fame and influence, and many a clergyman fifty years ago took them into the pulpit, clothed with a due amount of suggested illustration and appeal.

One of Simeon's contemporaries at Cambridge has made a still greater impression upon the memory of the Church. Henry Martyn, of St. John's College, was known as "the man who had not lost an hour," so assiduous were his habits of industry. Religious impressions at an early period rested on his mind amidst his eager studies. "A friend," he said, "attempted to persuade me that I ought to attend to reading, not for the praise of men but for the glory of God. This seemed to me strange but reasonable. I resolved therefore to maintain the opinion thence-

forth, but never designed, that I remember, that it should affect my conduct." Yet still he read the Bible and "said a prayer or two rather through fear than from any other cause." But light gradually broke on his mind, and spiritual truth by degrees entered his heart. "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not," were words which flashed across his memory as he entered the senate-house to compete for academic distinction. The emptiness of it he learned as soon as it was won. "I obtained my highest wishes, but was surprised to find I had grasped a shadow." Soon we find him asking, "Who that reflects upon the rock from which he was hewn, but must rejoice to give himself entirely and without reserve to God, to be sanctified by His Spirit? The soul that has truly experienced the love of God will not stay meanly inquiring how much he shall do, and thus limit his service, but will be earnestly seeking more and more to know the will of his heavenly Father, that he may be enabled to do it." He did not lose his early predilections. "Since I have known God in a saving manner, painting, poetry, and music have had charms unknown to me before. I have received what I suppose is a taste for them, for religion has refined my mind, and made it susceptible of impressions from the sublime and beautiful." Country scenes awakened in him the purest joy; every breeze, he said, seemed to breathe love into his heart. He would sit at evening out of the reach of all sounds but the rippling of the water, and the whistling of the curlew. "Several of the poetic images in Virgil, especially those taken from nature, together with the sight of the moon rising over the venerable walls and sending its light through the painted glass, turned away his thoughts from

present things, and raised them to God." Charles Simeon remarked one day to the Senior Wrangler, that Carey, who had come to be much talked of, exemplified the good which might be done by a single missionary; and the effect produced by that observation was followed up by the perusal of David Brainerd's memoirs. Martyn determined to go to India, to spend his whole life there in missionary work. "He went forth," says his biographer, "to preach the gospel to the heathen, and it was his fixed resolution to live and die amongst them. When he left England he left it wholly for Christ's sake, and he left it for ever."* A more sensitive nature there never was, for during his journey from London to Portsmouth he fainted, and fell into convulsions at the inn where he slept, as he thought of the friends whom he should leave behind, especially one whose life was bound up with his own. This shows the amount of self-sacrifice involved in the devotion of this extraordinary man, at a moment when zeal of such a description was beginning to revive in the English Church. His self-sacrifice has rarely been equalled. He was content to be nothing, to be unseen, to be forgotten. "If I never should see a native converted, God may design by my patience and continuance in the work, to encourage future missionaries." He was willing to lose his life, if only a breach could be made in the strongholds of Asiatic heathendom. He was willing to die on the walls, if he could only cheer on, in the track of victory, succeeding soldiers of the Cross.

An institution in connection with the Establishment, as it engaged the services of numerous clergymen, may appropriately receive notice at the close of this chapter.

* Sargent's "Memoir of Martyn," 19, 24, 65, 80, 94, 113.

The Honourable Robert Boyle founded a Lecture for the Defence of Natural and Revealed Religion, and a succession of lecturers between 1692 and 1739 delivered discourses on various subjects connected with the general theme. These productions, collected into three folio volumes, were published in the last of these years ; and respecting the whole collection Bishop Watson has remarked, "If all other defences of religion were lost, there is solid reasoning enough (if properly weighed) in these three volumes to remove the scruples of most unbelievers." The lectures were continued throughout the century ; and amongst them I notice a course* containing a Comparison of Revelation with the operations of the Human Mind,—a subject rather new, the selection of which indicates that a scientific position was then not only claimed by philosophers, but allowed by Divines, for a careful analysis of mental experiences, and that this neglected branch of study was becoming subservient to the interests of religion. The evidences of design in the structure of the mind have a just claim to be coupled with those in the structure of the body, and it is interesting to find the claim recognized at a period which is generally referred to as almost utterly destitute of original thought in the domain of theology. Warburton founded another course of Lectures on subjects connected with prophecy : Hurd, Halifax, Bagot, and others delivering each a series in succession. John Bampton, Canon of Salisbury, also bequeathed property for the endowment of eight divinity sermons, to be preached annually at St. Mary's, Oxford, on topics specified in an extract from his will prefixed to the yearly publication of the lectures. Most of the Bampton Lecturers for the last

* By James Williamson, 1778-1780.

century are now forgotten, except by a very small class of readers. With respect to one course, that for 1783, on Mohammedism, the most popular of the series during the last century, it should be remarked that it occasioned considerable discussion on the ground of the very material but altogether unacknowledged assistance which Dr. White, the author, received in the course of their preparation. Their composition, to a large extent, has been attributed to the Rev. Samuel Badcock. Beyond all question he and Dr. Parr contributed greatly to the literary merits of the volume, yet White was really a superior Oriental scholar, and justice has not been done to him in that respect. The applause which the lectures received in the University was very great until their origin came to be canvassed; then they sunk into comparative neglect. It may be added that scarcely any volumes of sermons published towards the end of the century by orthodox clergymen, besides those of Horne and Horsley, secured a wide circulation.

CHAPTER X.

AS the object of this history is not merely to describe great events, or to portray illustrious churchmen, it is proper to adduce at this point a few illustrations of religious life drawn from the memoirs of Episcopalian laymen and ladies during the last forty years of the eighteenth century.

Habits of *conversation* may be well illustrated by reference to a man of pre-eminent power, and a type of Church orthodoxy. Bolt Court was the abode of Samuel Johnson during the latter part of his life ; it was also the scene of his death. The house is gone, and the little garden has disappeared "which he took delight in watering ;" but prints of the spot are preserved, in which we see the three circular steps leading up to the entrance, the flat projection over the doorway, the long row of windows in the roof, and the shrubs adorning the leads of a lower room, in advance of the adjoining residence. Here it was that the moralist, one of the greatest talkers of the age, carried on many of the colloquies preserved by his admiring biographer. In Bolt Court one day occurred a remarkable interchange of thought respecting the subject of religion. "'There are, I am afraid,' said Boswell, 'many people who have no religion at all.' 'And sensible people too,' added Mr. Seward, who happened to

be present. 'Why, sir, not sensible in that respect,' rejoined Johnson. 'There must be either a natural or a moral stupidity, if one lives in a total neglect of so very important a concern.' 'I wonder that there should be people without religion,' added Seward. 'Sir,' exclaimed his host, 'you need not wonder at this, when you consider how large a proportion of almost every man's life is passed without thinking of it. I myself was for some years totally regardless of religion. It had dropped out of my mind. It was at an early period of my life. Sickness brought it back, and I hope I have never lost it since.' *

What Johnson thought respecting two points in Christian theology he expressed at another time when on a visit to Welwyn, the parish of which Young, author of the "Night Thoughts," had been incumbent. On Sunday after church, the visitor in a meditative mood observed, "With respect to original sin, the inquiry is not necessary ; for whatever is the cause of human corruption, men are evidently and confessedly so corrupt, that all the laws of heaven and earth are insufficient to restrain them from crimes. Whatever difficulty there may be in the conception of vicarious punishments, it is an opinion which has had possession of mankind in all ages. There is no nation that has not used the practice of sacrifices. Whoever therefore denies the propriety of vicarious punishments, holds an opinion which the sentiments and practice of mankind have contradicted from the beginning of the world. The great sacrifice for the sins of mankind was offered at the death of the Messiah, who is called in Scripture 'The Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the

* Boswell's "Life of Johnson," VIII. 210. William Seward, F.R.S., was editor of "Anecdotes," and "Literary Miscellanies."

world.' To judge of the reasonableness of the scheme of redemption, it must be considered as necessary to the government of the universe that God should make known His perpetual and irreconcilable detestation of moral evil." "The end of punishment is to reclaim and warn. *That* punishment will both reclaim and warn, which shows evidently such abhorrence of sin in God, as may deter us from it, or strike us with dread of vengeance when we have committed it." * These conversations belong to the years 1781 and 1783, when Johnson was above seventy-two; and it is curious to find in Cowper's correspondence a reference, in the year after the last of these dates, to the eminent critic, as having recently passed through a great change. In writing to John Newton, the poet remarks, "We rejoice in the account you give us of Dr. Johnson. His conversion will indeed be a singular proof of the omnipotence of grace; and the more singular the more decided." † This could not mean that Johnson had then begun to turn his attention to religious subjects, for he had done so for years; but it would seem that about the time indicated, the idea was abroad that his convictions assumed a character more decidedly "Evangelical," and it is possible that a report respecting conversations of this kind gave rise to a rumour which gratified the Olney poet.‡

From the conversations of one literary man I proceed to the *correspondence* of another. In the town of Huntingdon, Cowper took up his abode with the Unwins, in an old house whose wainscoted rooms remain almost unaltered, and while there in 1766, he describes in a characteristic letter his manner of life,

* "Life of Johnson," VIII. 130.

† Cowper's "Works," III. 109.

‡ Ibid., 417.

giving a vivid idea of the strict, methodical, unworldly habits maintained by religious people of his class. "As to amusements, I mean what the world calls such, we have none. The place indeed swarms with them, and cards and dancing are the professed business of almost all the gentle inhabitants of Huntingdon. We refuse to take part in them, or to be accessories to this way of murdering our time, and by so doing have acquired the name of Methodists. Having told you how we do *not* spend our time, I will next say how we do. We breakfast commonly between eight and nine ; till eleven we read either the Scriptures or the sermons of some faithful preacher of those holy mysteries ; at eleven we attend Divine service, which is performed here twice every day ; and from twelve to three we separate and amuse ourselves as we please. During that interval I either read in my own apartment, or walk or ride, or work in the garden. We seldom sit an hour after dinner, but if weather permits adjourn to the garden, where with Mrs. Unwin and her son I have generally the pleasure of religious conversation until tea time. If it rains or is too windy for walking, we either converse within doors, or sing some hymns of Martin's Collection, and by the help of Mrs. Unwin's harpsichord make up a tolerable concert, in which our hearts, I hope, are the best and most musical performers. After tea we sally forth to walk in good earnest. Mrs. Unwin is a good walker, and we have generally travelled about four miles before we see home again. When the days are short we make this excursion in the former part of the day, between church time and dinner. At night we read and converse as before till supper, and commonly finish the evening with hymns or a sermon, and last of all the family are

called to prayers. I need not tell you that such a life as this is consistent with the utmost cheerfulness, accordingly we are all happy." * Cowper's image is reflected in his letters ; his hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows, he reveals in the confidence of friendship, and though in some respects, especially towards the end of life, his experience became morbid, and passed beyond the limits of a sane sensibility, yet in it may be seen phases of sentiment such as he shared in common with thousands of serious Christians. In the bag of the post-boy, with "the twanging horn, crossing Olney Bridge, that with its wearisome and needful length bestrides the wintry flood," doubtless there might be found epistles in points of feeling similar to those of the retired poet, when he dwelt in a modest house, in the midst of the town, which so many pilgrims now love to visit. The shadows which fell over his spirit were peculiarly dark, yet his mental conflicts were not utterly unknown by other Christians in his day, any more than ours. Psychological facts of a mysterious description form a puzzling chapter in human history, and are not to be set aside because they are unwelcome. Mental, moral, and physical causes, especially the last, have contributed to produce many-sided aspects of character ; and if complete memoirs could be written of eighteenth-century Christians, particularly those of the same class as the Olney bard, it would be found that under the surface of an outwardly tranquil life often rushed angry torrents of anxiety, of terror, and even of despair. But he felt much interest in passing incidents, and charmingly pictured them in his correspondence. He lets us into petty ecclesiastical jealousies in a Buckinghamshire

* "Works," II. 196.

town, only a specimen of other English towns. "Because," he says to his friend, John Newton, after he had left the place, "we have nobody to preach the gospel at Olney, Mr. ——— waits only for a barn, at present occupied by a strolling company. The moment they quit it he begins. He is disposed to think the dissatisfied of all denominations may possibly be united under his standard, and that the great work of forming a more extensive and more established interest is reserved for him." Zealous preachers, acting under an impulse of their own, did good in many of the rural districts; but there can be no doubt that sometimes they provided an Adullam Cave for discontented members of other denominations. The catholic-hearted vicar, however, after a visit to his old cure, remarked, to Cowper, "There are many who have left the Church, but I hope they have not left the Lord;" and in a feeling of this kind the Olney poet could fully sympathize.*

If Cowper's correspondence embalms religious fact and sentiment, one of Cowper's friends may be introduced as an example of religious liberality. John Thornton, a simple, earnest-minded gentleman, had a counting-house in London, and a villa at Clapham. "He generally attended public worship at some church or Episcopalian chapel several evenings in the week, and would often sit up to a late hour in his own study, at the top of the house, engaged in religious exercises."† He was one of a class, rather numerous at that time, who while conscientiously attached to the Establishment, were exceedingly Low Churchmen, and attached more importance to evangelical principles than to any

* Southey's "Cowper," I. 249.

† "Wilberforce's Life," by his sons, I. 283.

political or ecclesiastical questions. Hence they lived on the confines of Dissent, so far in a kind of borderland, which instead of being a district disturbed by war, was a region full of peace, where Episcopalians and Nonconformists dwelt together in love and concord. "Cowper," Southey informs us, "was supplied by this excellent man with a sum for charitable distribution; Mr. Thornton having been informed how little his means for relieving the distressed were commensurate with his will." At the same time Newton, as curate of Olney, receiving not more than eighty pounds a year, derived material assistance in the shape of "bank notes" from his merchant friend. "Be hospitable," he said, "and keep open house for such as are worthy of an entertainment; help the poor and needy; I will stately allow you two hundred pounds a year, and readily send whatever you have occasion to draw for more." *

Of all forms of Christian effort maintained by the laity, none can surpass, if even it can equal, that which was begun on a large scale and in a lasting way, by Robert Raikes, of Gloucester, about 1783. He has given an account of the origin of his important undertaking:—"Some business leading me one morning into the suburbs of the city, where the lowest of the people (who are principally employed in the pin manufactory) chiefly reside, I was struck with concern at seeing a group of children, wretchedly ragged, at play in the streets. I asked an inhabitant whether those children belonged to that part of the town, and lamented their misery and idleness. 'Ah! sir,' said the woman to whom I was speaking, 'could you take a view of this part of the town on a Sunday, you would be shocked

* "Life of Cowper," I. 168.

indeed ; for then the street is filled with multitudes of these wretches, who, released that day from employment, spend their time in noise and riot, playing at "chuck," and cursing and swearing in a manner so horrid as to convey to any serious mind an idea of hell rather than any other place. We have a worthy clergyman (said she), curate of our parish, who has put some of them to school ; but upon the Sabbath they are all given up to follow their own inclinations without restraint, as their parents, totally abandoned themselves, have no idea of instilling into the minds of their children principles to which they themselves are entire strangers.' This conversation suggested to me that it would be at least a harmless attempt, if it were productive of no good, should some little plan be formed to check the deplorable profanation of the Sabbath. I then inquired of the woman if there were any decent, well-disposed women of the neighbourhood, who kept schools for teaching to read. I presently was directed to four ; to them I applied, and made an agreement with them to receive as many children as I should send upon the Sunday, whom they were to instruct in reading and in the Church Catechism. For this I engaged to pay them each a shilling for their day's employment. The women seemed pleased with the proposal. I then waited on the clergyman before mentioned, and imparted to him my plan. He was so much satisfied with the idea, that he engaged to lend his assistance, by going round to the schools on a Sunday afternoon, to examine the progress that was made, and to enforce order and decorum among such a set of little heathens."*

* Quoted in "Gloucestershire Tracts," No. XIX., "Robert Raikes."

soon inspired the sympathy of religious people at large, and led to the establishment of schools, which at first in many instances were imperfectly conducted, but they improved as they multiplied, and ultimately took the form now familiar to Christians of every name.

Another lay worker in the Church of England was William Wilberforce, who combined within himself powers of conversation and correspondence akin to those of Johnson and Cowper, whilst he emulated the charity of Thornton and the activity of Raikes. In early life he had reverently perused the Scriptures and formed habits of devotion, and when at the University of Cambridge had refused to sign the Articles ; after he had attained his majority he became immersed in the dissipation of fashionable society, and for a while he was addicted to gambling. A great spiritual change passed upon his character and life when about twenty-five, referring to which, in after days, he remarked, "By degrees the promises and offers of the gospel produced in me something of a settled peace of conscience. I devoted myself, for whatever might be the term of my future life, to the service of my God and Saviour, and, with many infirmities and deficiencies, through His help I continue to this day." * He had not long felt the results of such a renewal when he engaged in efforts for reviving religion and reforming social manners, procuring a Royal Proclamation against vice and immorality, and establishing a Society for the promotion of his objects. His purpose is explained as supplementing the labours of John Wesley. Wesley's mission was to the poor ; but there was needed some reformer who should raise his voice in high places, and do, within the Church and near the throne, what

* "Wilberforce's Life," by his sons, I. 112.

Wesley had accomplished in the humble meeting-house and amongst the vulgar multitude. Associations for the "better observance of the Sabbath day" were included in Wilberforce's plans, so were religious schools and the erection of chapels of ease; and to provide for the advocacy of Evangelical principles, which he firmly embraced, he paid much attention to the subject of Church patronage, and also engaged in establishing a periodical called the *Christian Observer*. At the close of the century he commenced his career as an Abolitionist, in connection with Henry Thornton; and, with the assistance of Clarkson, Macaulay, and Stephen, he carried the work of Emancipation through its early as well as its later stages. From first to last he met with opposition; but Christian faith was the talisman of his success as well as his happiness.

The most important instance of Wilberforce's activity in connection with Evangelical sentiments, was the publication of his "Practical View." "'1793, Saturday, August 3rd,' he says in his journal, 'I laid the first timbers of my Tract.' In 1797 the tract had increased to a volume, and when launched it was hailed in most religious circles as a goodly vessel. It was translated into French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and German; and its influence corresponded with its diffusion. 'It may be affirmed,' say his biographers, 'beyond all question, that it gave the first general impulse to that warmer and more earnest spring of piety which, amongst all its many evils, has happily distinguished the last half-century.'"^{*} A favourite at Court, a leading Member of Parliament, the friend of William Pitt, and a popular advocate of philanthropic measures, his *conversion* excited inquiry, and the book

^{*} "Life," II. 205.

was intended to explain what to many seemed a riddle.* The author laid open that faith which had produced the change, feeling sure that what had transformed him could transform others. He wrote, not for literary fame, but for religious usefulness. The work is open to criticism ; yet criticism is disarmed by its tone and temper. Devotional rather than argumentative, it is not so much designed to convince the sceptic as to contrast defective views of religion with what the author apprehended to be real Christianity. In short, it is a Lay sermon on Evangelical piety, in which the social position of the preacher commands the widest audience, and his unprofessional character gives additional weight to his appeals. He dwells upon the corruption of human nature, upon inadequate views with regard to our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, upon the terms of acceptance with God, and the nature of practical Christianity. Defects in this respect he seeks to supply according to his own convictions. He deeply laments that Christianity has been reduced to a system of ethics, which he describes as a reaction against the extremes of Puritanical theology, whilst he praises Owen, Howe, and Flavel, and mentions that "most useful book, 'The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul,' by Dr. Doddridge," to which he was greatly indebted for his own spiritual change. He deplores the scepticism of contemporary literary men, and refutes the allegation that the world could not go on if his system of religion prevailed. A mild genial

* In 1818 the work had reached the thirteenth edition ; and I have now a copy of it before me with his autograph, "To the Athenæum, this Book is respectfully presented by W. Wilberforce." In this presentation he showed his desire to promote the circulation of the volume amongst literary men.

tone pervades the Treatise, with little or nothing to offend, although he insists that the time in which he lived was no time for half-measures. The steel glove Wilberforce wore was covered as well as lined with velvet. He did not follow the fashion of previous reformers, and therefore he did not please all Evangelicals. Some called him "legal," others "a man of rigid Calvinism;" such counter opinions being the best tribute that could be paid to a work which united the spiritual and practical sides of religion.

Another instance of benevolent activity may be drawn from the life of Hannah More. Everybody knows something of her early celebrity as an authoress; of the admiration she inspired in fashionable circles; and of her flattering acquaintance with Lowth, Garrick, and Johnson;—but it may not be so generally known that she was also at an early period the writer of tracts. When the French Revolution broke out, she anonymously issued one entitled "William Chip," and this was followed by others, in the preparation of which her sisters took a part. They bore the name of the "Cheap Repository Tracts." Amongst her private papers was found this record: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, that I have been spared to accomplish this work. Do Thou, O Lord, bless and prosper it to the good of many; and if it do good, may I give to Thee the glory and take to myself the shame of its defects. I have devoted three years to this work. Two millions of these tracts were disposed of during the first year. God works by weak instruments to show that the glory is all His own." Her example was followed by another lady, named Wilkinson, residing in Clapham, who, from the year 1792, employed the press of the Philanthropic Society in producing a total number of tracts amount-

ing to almost half a million. Besides Hannah More's Christian work in this department, she at a later period zealously devoted herself to the establishment and support of village schools, in which Wilberforce became her sympathizing coadjutor.

Before entering on another chapter, I may remark that the state of the country was little if at all better in the last than in the first half of the century.

The mining population at that time, in the absence of all those methods for their improvement which modern civilization has contrived, were in a state little better than that of barbarism; and the colliers of Kingswood and the Forest of Dean exhibited instances of degradation and brutality which were a disgrace to the country. The rural districts were inhabited by labourers not idle but ignorant, generally unable to read or write, and seeking their chief enjoyment in the potations and noisy amusements of the village inn. Towns down in the country were in a state of soporific existence, without any healthful currents of thought and feeling such as now stir the most retired and stagnant pools of social life; where the better classes reached only a low degree of mental and moral experience, the lower grades could not but be in a deplorable condition. Cities of wealth and importance flourished in different parts of the country, some now decayed were in the zenith of prosperity. Manufactures in the West and East of England took the lead, as those in the North do now, but little or nothing was done for the intellectual and religious culture of industrious weavers and dyers, and their wits were sharpened chiefly by low conversation over glasses of ale, by betting at cock-fights, and by the excitement of bull-baitings. London—the abode of

the aristocracy, the home of the courts of justice, the centre of literary life, and the main work-shop for the printing press—also included within the circuit of its walls and its outlying suburbs the opposite extremes of society, if Society be a word applicable to the refuse of humanity which infested the back slums or polluted the outskirts of the Capital. Bad as some parts of the Metropolis may be, after all which has been done since the beginning of the present century, they were incomparably worse a hundred years ago, and scenes of outrageous vice and profligacy might be witnessed at Bartholomew and Greenwich fairs too shocking to describe. The environs were exposed to such lawless incidents that quiet honest people were afraid to go out by themselves after dark, and would wait together at Knightsbridge before they were strong enough to venture on the road to Kensington, beset by footpads. A little further in the country, and in the more desolate districts of the West End, even members of the royal family were stopped and robbed by highwaymen. It required courage in a single horseman to gallop over Hounslow Heath at midday. Daring exploits on the main thoroughfares brought many to the gallows, the presenting of a pistol at the window of a post-chaise by a crape-masked horseman was often expiated at Tyburn; and, what is worse, these daring acts were deemed heroic, and multitudes lining the street traversed by the death-cart, with the condemned sitting on their coffins, looked with sympathy and admiration on the wretched criminals about to suffer. Gibbets on Blackheath and along the banks of the Thames, erected as warnings, were so commonplace that they only hardened a large class of beholders;

and it was just the same at Newgate, where thieves were hung by dozens. The Fleet Prison stood pre-eminent amongst places of that description for the host of debtors it confined, some noted for their profligacy, others for their privations, all for their moral wretchedness. Gaols and bridewells throughout the country, instead of being used for corrective discipline, were dens of filth and idleness, where the hardened corrupted the comparatively innocent, and the bad made one another worse ; and when they had endured the execution of their sentence they came out greater adepts in wickedness than they were when they entered. In the army and navy, whatever there might be in regularity of drill and seamanship, soldiers out of barracks and sailors on shore were notorious for their excesses.

CHAPTER XI.

AMIDST such a state of things, during the first ten years of George III.'s reign, Whitefield pursued his work with unwearied assiduity. From one end to the other of the United Kingdom he travelled and preached "through evil report," mocked on the stage, abused in pamphlets, and spoken of even by the benevolent Jonas Hanway as "demeaning himself like an inhabitant of Bedlam;" and "through good report," cheered, not only by the sympathy of Methodist friends, but by the warm commendations of the Houses of Assembly and the Governor-general of Georgia, where, in his transatlantic visits, he had established his famous Orphanage. He persevered with steady determination and unfaltering courage, and just before his death, his zeal was burning with the same ardour as ever. In a letter dated April 1st, 1769, is seen a fair specimen of his style of correspondence, and his satisfaction at acceptance given to his labours in fashionable circles:—"Blessed be His name, we have been favoured with delightful Passover feasts. The shout of the King of kings is still heard in the midst of our Methodist camps, and the shout of 'Grace, Grace!' resounds from many quarters. Our Almighty Jesus knows how to build His temple in troublous times. His work prospers in the hands of the Elect Countess, who is

gone to Bath much recovered from her late indisposition, and worthy Lady Fanny Shirley proposes soon to follow, in order to reside there. Some more coronets, I hear, are likely to be laid at the Redeemer's feet. They glitter gloriously when set in and surrounded by a crown of thorns—

“ ‘Subjects of the Lord, be bold ;
Jesus will His kingdom hold ;
Wheels encircling wheels must run,
Each in course to bring it on.’ ”*

This style of expression is characteristic of the man. It violated rules of taste, and savoured of conventional phraseology liable to misapprehension, but of his perfect sincerity there can be no doubt. His zeal knew no affectation, whatever we may think of certain expressions to which he was fondly attached. The letters of his last year are full of exclamations, such as “Grace, Grace!” “Ebenezer, Ebenezer!” “Hallelujah!” “Abba Father!” which it would be insufferable to read, if Whitefield had been an ease-loving self-indulgent person. But he wished to die in harness, to fall in the field of conflict, to finish amidst the blaze of battle. He ever was going to and fro on his Master's behests “a floating pilgrim,” to use his own expression. He liked to revisit spots where he had been before, doing, as he said, his work thoroughly, “cross-ploughing the ground again.” He could never rest. When the weather might have drawn him into winter quarters, he was out in the fields amidst frost and snow. Sickness did not repress his zeal, and when another man would have been nursed in his chamber he was standing up in the pulpit. His death, which

* “Whitefield's Letters,” III. 384.

occurred in America during his seventh visit, was worthy of his life, and is thus described by one who alone has communicated the interesting particulars : " While at supper in Newbury Port, the pavement in front of the house, and even its hall, were crowded with people impatient to hear a few words from his eloquent lips ; but he was exhausted, and rising from the table, said to one of the clergymen who were with him—' Brother, you must speak to these dear people, I cannot say a word.' Taking a candle, he hastened towards his bed-room ; but before reaching it, he was arrested by the suggestion of his own generous heart, that he ought not thus to desert the anxious crowd hungering for the Bread of Life from his hands. He paused on the stairs to address them. He had preached his last sermon ; this was to be his last exhortation. It would seem that some pensive misgiving, some vague presentiment touched his soul with the saddening apprehension that the moments were too precious to be lost in rest ; he lingered on the stairway whilst the crowd gazed up at him with tearful eyes, as Elisha at the ascending prophet. His voice . . . flowed on until the candle, which he held in his hand, burnt away, and went out in its socket. The next morning he was not." *

Moorfields Tabernacle and Tottenham Court Chapel, places where Whitefield most frequently preached, were huge edifices of no architectural character whatever. The red brick walls were as plain as possible, perforated by small, mean-looking windows, cut up into tiny panes. The doors were little better than barn doors ; and, on entering, the worshipper found himself in a vast area, overshadowed by four deep

* Stevens's " History of Methodism," 360.

galleries resting on heavy columns. The floor was for the most part covered with rude benches ; a cluster of pews, lined with green baize, stretched out a little way in front of the pulpit. After Whitefield's death, the pulpits continued to be supplied by Clergymen and Nonconformists ; and at length an energetic man, named Matthew Wilks, took the oversight of both congregations, assisted by pastors from different parts of the country. He prolonged his labours for many years during the present century. Of singular appearance, with what might be called a *knowing face*, above which rested a curious little wig, he possessed a voice very inharmonious, a style and manner very odd. His thoughts were ingenious and striking, his language quaint, pointed, and easy to be remembered. His sermons abounded in racy remarks, which rendered it difficult for his audience to sleep ; and whilst common people were attracted by his knowledge of human nature and Divine truth, the educated were not repelled by his extreme homeliness. But the most remarkable of Whitefield's disciples was Rowland Hill. When a boy at Eton he held prayer meetings, and used for that purpose to go to a poor woman's cottage, which he reached across the College fields, leaping over a ditch by the help of a pole. At Cambridge, his religious decision struck everybody, and while there he came under the influence of George Whitefield. At Hawkston, the domain of his father, he began to preach at an early age, uniting in this irregular proceeding with his brother Richard, much to the concern and trouble of their venerable parent. Rowland had an expressive countenance, eloquent eyes, an imperial nose, a powerful voice, an erect gait, and a very commanding appearance altogether. He

was the perfect gentleman, full of wit and humour, yet intent on religious usefulness. Not learned, not logical in the scholastic sense of the term, but rambling, disconnected, diffuse, he nevertheless produced great effect by his pointed, piercing, and practical homilies. Sheridan used to say, "I go to hear Rowland Hill because his ideas come red-hot from the heart." And Milner, the Dean of Carlisle, told him, "Mr. Hill, I felt to-day 'tis this *slap-dash* preaching, say what they will, that does all the good." Having preached as a student, and having avowed a determination never to confine himself to the pulpits of the Establishment, he had to wait some time before he could obtain holy orders. Refused by six Bishops, he at length, in 1773, received ordination, "without any promise or condition whatever," from the Bishop of Bath and Wells. But it should be remembered, that whilst he used these words, by taking Orders and by subscription, he subjected himself to Episcopal control, and to the authority of the Church canons. Yet, throughout life, he continued to preach all over the country. When he could, he obtained admission to parish pulpits; but in meeting-houses, barns, and the open air, he was ready to engage in his sacred employment.

Amidst his wanderings, there were two places which he regarded as his home,—Wotton-under-Edge and Surrey Chapel. The former is situated in one of the most beautiful districts in Gloucestershire, and is famous as the scene of Whitefield's preaching: there Hill built a modest country-house, and a place of worship in the Whitefield style, called the *Tabernacle*. Opposite stretched an amphitheatre of hills, covered with hanging woods, and enclosing a fertile valley. About half an hour before the service, the preacher

might be seen, watching through a telescope his scattered flock, as they descended the valley, and making remarks to those near him on the seriousness or levity of their manners. The first stone of Surrey Chapel was laid in 1782, and the notorious Lord George Gordon contributed towards it fifty pounds. The building was vested in trustees, but its care was entrusted to the occupant of the pulpit "As long as he should preach agreeably to the doctrinal articles of the Church of England, and did not give the use of the pulpit to any one who was known to preach otherwise." Out of the income of the place he received only three hundred pounds per annum, the remaining receipts being devoted to charitable institutions connected with the chapel, which were further supported munificently by himself.

It has been often said that Whitefield was a mere preacher, and instituted no kind of organization for perpetuating the influence of his life work ; but here a distinguished personage once more claims our attention, for she co-operated with him most energetically whilst he was living, and supplied his lack of service in point of ecclesiastical leadership after he was dead. In 1760, Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, had attained the age of fifty-three, and, as we have seen, had long been known as a patroness of the Methodist movement. Numbers of the nobility had then for twenty years been in the habit of crowding her Drawing Rooms to listen to Whitefield's preaching, and during that period she had earnestly endeavoured to impress the minds of her friends with the importance of religious subjects. We find the proud Duchess of Marlborough, telling her in a letter, "The Duchess of Ancaster, Lady Townsend, and Lady Cobham were exceedingly pleased

with many observations in Mr. Whitefield's sermon in St. Sepulchre's Church, which has made me lament ever since that I did not hear it, as it might have been the means of doing me some good—for good, alas, I do want, but where among the corrupt sons and daughters of Adam am I to find it? Your Ladyship must direct me." This would awaken hope respecting her illustrious friend, but a different impression would be made upon her sanguine mind, when she opened a note from another woman, prouder even than Queen Sarah. "I thank your Ladyship," said the Duchess of Buckingham, "for the information concerning the Methodist preachers; their doctrines are most repulsive and strongly tinged with impertinence, and disrespect towards their superiors, in perpetually endeavouring to level all ranks and do away with all distinctions. It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting, and I cannot but wonder that your Ladyship should relish any sentiment so much at variance with high rank and good breeding."* The Countess of Suffolk, the "Mrs. Howard" of the poet Pope, "more remarkable for beauty than understanding," carried her hatred to the spiritually levelling principle still further than her imperious contemporary, and after hearing Whitefield at the Countess's house, flew into a passion, denounced the sermon as a personal attack, and rushed out of the room. Several, no doubt, were much affected by Whitefield's preaching; but it is to be feared, that as it had become a fashion to hear the orator, too many listened without real benefit, and the

* "Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon," I. 25, 27.

goodness of some who were touched by his appeals was as the "morning cloud."

Lady Huntingdon found more to encourage and repay her religious zeal in other classes of society. Amongst them in later life her efforts for the conversion of sinners were chiefly carried on; and in her earlier days she had indicated signs of preparation for the singular post she ultimately occupied, as the "Elect Lady," presiding over the Calvinistic followers of her popular friend and chaplain. In 1741, she had distinctly patronized lay preaching in the neighbourhood of Donnington Park, where she resided; and it was to lay preaching, at least to that which Anglican Churchmen regarded as such, that Lady Huntingdon was at last mainly indebted for the perpetuation and success of her missionary plans. In 1749 a striking incident occurred, marking her out as an ecclesiastical leader. In that year Whitefield told Lady Fanny Shirley, the Countess's relative, that they two were to be to him a Dorcas and a Phœbe, female helpers in the Church. He opened the subject to the Countess herself, and received from her in reply a letter, which he read to the congregation in the Tabernacle, after which "thousands heartily joined in singing the following verses:—

"Gladly we join to pray for those,
Who rich with worldly honours shine,
Who dare to own a Saviour's cause,
And in that hated cause to join.
Yes, we would praise Thee, that a few
Love Thee, though rich and noble too.
Uphold this star in Thy right hand,
Crown her endeavours with success:
Among the great ones may she stand,
A witness of Thy righteousness,
Till many nobles join Thy train,
And triumph in the Lamb that's slain.'"

A hymn so full of exultation that at least one titled lady had identified herself with them, would inspire the sympathies of the Tabernacle congregation, and raise their voices to a loftier pitch than usual; and when the service had concluded, the preacher wrote to his noble friend: "A leader is wanting. This however has been put upon your Ladyship by the Great Head of the Church, an honour conferred on few, but an earnest of one to be put upon your Ladyship before men and angels when time shall be no more."* In ecclesiastical history we read of men suddenly raised to bishoprics, Ambrose at Milan, for example, by the consentaneous shout of an assembled multitude; but never before had there been an election like this at the Moorfields Tabernacle in 1749.

Her Ladyship's *Connexion*, as it is termed, was gradually formed. Though never very definite, it had something about it distinctive, not as a new form of Episcopalianism, or Presbyterianism, or of Independence; ecclesiastical distinctiveness it had none. Its distinctiveness lay in the very absence of specific Church legislation, and in one absorbing purpose to secure places of worship where evangelical preaching should be maintained, either by Episcopally ordained clergymen, or ministers of another order; the doctrinal articles of the Church of England being the standard of faith, and the Common Prayer of the Church the standard of worship. Brighthelmstone, as it was then called, was only beginning to rise into importance about 1750, when attention was drawn to it as a bathing place, and the former fishing village became a town of fashionable resort. There distinguished people from London were wont to congregate, and the

* "Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon," I. 117.

Countess of Huntingdon saw how favourable a spot it presented for one of her chapels. Whitefield visited Brighton, in 1759, and first preached under a tree in a field behind the White Lion Inn. Lady Huntingdon took a house in North Street, and built a chapel near it, the expense being defrayed by the sale of her jewels to the amount of nearly seven hundred pounds. It was opened in 1761. Bath was much earlier in its renown than Brighton. Fashionable society had been accustomed to assemble there in the early part of the century. Bishops and other dignitaries "drank the waters," and in the beautiful city on a hill, sought rest and recreation. It was just the place for her Ladyship's efforts, and she distinguished it above others by the chapel she built in 1765, in the "Vineyards." Horace Walpole paid a visit of curiosity to this place of worship, and then describes the service. "They have boys and girls with charming voices that sing hymns in parts. The chapel is very neat, with *true* Gothic windows. I was glad to see that luxury is creeping in upon them before persecution. They have very neat mahogany stands for branches, and brackets of the same in taste. At the upper end is a broad *haut-pas* of four steps, advancing in the middle; at each end of the broadest part are two eagles with red cushions for the parson and the clerk. Behind them rise three more steps, in the midst of which is a third eagle for a pulpit. Scarlet armchairs to all three. On either hand a balcony for elect ladies. The rest of the congregation sit on forms. Behind the pit, in a dark niche, is a plain table within rails; so you see the throne is for the apostle."* Tunbridge Wells was, in the middle of the last century, a more favourite resort

* "Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon," I. 477.

than Bath or Brighton. Card parties, balls, assemblies, and masquerades were the fashionable amusements, and above seventy coaches sometimes drew up at the door of the Assembly Rooms. There might be seen Johnson, in snuff-coloured suit, bag wig, and cocked hat; and Gilbert, Bishop of Salisbury, in his black gown and garter, blue ribbon and badge; and Whiston, lean and spare, in clerical dress, and a pair of bands; Garrick, the Earl of Chatham, Speaker Onslow, and the Duchess of Kingston were among the visitors. After preachings, promoted by the Countess, in the little Presbyterian meeting-house, she determined, on one of her visits to Tunbridge Wells, in 1769, to erect a new place of worship, "a quaint structure of weather-board and tiles," which, after being several times enlarged, was taken down in 1870. Whitefield preached at the opening one of his wonderful sermons. The dramatic power with which he painted Christ's agony in the Garden, and appealed to the people, to look and listen as if the scene had been before them, was long talked of among visitors at the Wells. Lady Huntingdon did not neglect the metropolis; the place of worship most commonly identified with her name there is *Spa Fields Chapel*, once a pantheon in the midst of pleasure gardens. Difficulties existed in the way of her obtaining the property, and devoting it to sacred uses, but at length these were overcome and the building was opened in 1775.

Unwilling to separate from the Establishment, and at the same time influenced by personal partiality, she secured the services of Episcopalian clergymen. Wesley and Whitefield were especially welcome in her pulpits. So were Romaine and Venn. There were two clergymen who threw themselves into the Methodist enter-

prise, and were willing to officiate in the Countess's chapels. Martin Madan, founder and first chaplain of the Lock Hospital, was one of them. Being at a coffee-house one evening he was asked to go and hear John Wesley, and then to return and imitate the manner of the preacher; for Madan was a great mimic. When he listened to the text, "Prepare to meet thy God," he was awestruck; and on coming back to his gay companions, as they inquired "if he had taken off the old Methodist," "No, gentlemen," he replied, "but he has taken me off." Being a man of ability and education, he entered into holy orders, and acquired a leading position among Methodist clergymen. John Berridge, Vicar of Everton, was another of the same class in point of doctrine, but very eccentric both in his character and preaching. On being summoned to appear before his Diocesan, to account for certain irregularities, his Lordship noticing that he did not seem to be sufficiently deferential, asked, "Do you know who I am?" "Yes," he replied, "poor sinful dust and ashes like myself." Two other clergymen also assisted the Countess, Dr. Haweis, Rector of All Saints', Aldwinkle, Northamptonshire, and a clergyman named Glascott. The former of these preached at the opening of Spa Fields Chapel; and the latter officiated in the same place. William Sellon, who held the living of St. James', Clerkenwell, was a bitter opponent of Methodism, and he determined to put a stop to the ministration of his brethren in unconsecrated and unlicensed edifices. He first endeavoured to get Spa Fields Chapel entirely in his own hands. Failing to accomplish this, he instituted a suit in the Consistorial Court of the Bishop of London, against clergymen who had preached there. Lady Huntingdon

imagined that, as a peeress, she had a right to employ her own chaplains where she pleased ; and as she invested these clergymen with that office, and attached Spa Fields to her own residence, she claimed on that ground exemption from the operation of the ecclesiastical law. But in this she failed. A suit against Haweis and Glascott was successful ; and they were prohibited from officiating any more at Spa Fields. Clergymen being thus excluded from the pulpit, no course remained for her, determined as she was to have worship carried on according to her own views, but to employ Dissenting ministers, and to place them and the building under the shield of the Toleration Act, and so she was compelled at last, most reluctantly, to become an avowed Dissenter. To perpetuate her *Connexion*, she had long seen that ministers, not Episcopally ordained, must be employed in her chapels, and that, therefore, the education of young men for the purpose was of vital importance.

Some years before, as early as 1767, she founded a College at Trevecca, South Wales, and appointed as president John William Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley, whose early history, character, and parochial zeal were most remarkable. He was from a boy decidedly of an intellectual turn ; and when at school in Geneva he would pursue his studies all day, and then carry them far into the night. His friends hoped he would be a clergyman, but he made up his mind to enter the army, and accepted a captain's commission in the service of the King of Portugal. Circumstances prevented him from carrying out his purpose, and he came to England on a visit ; it proved to be his permanent residence. During his employment as tutor in a gentleman's family in Shropshire, he passed

through a process of experience not uncommon. He was brought to see that the religion he possessed lacked vitality. Consciousness of the need of abundant prayer seems to have been one of the first pulsations of his spiritual life. "I shall wonder," said the lady in whose family he lived, "if our tutor does not turn Methodist by-and-by." "Methodist, madam?" asked he; "what is that?" "Why," she replied, with contemptuous exaggeration, "the Methodists are a people that do nothing but pray—they are praying all day and all night." "Are they?" said he; "then, by the help of God, I will find them out, if they be above ground." "About the time of my entering into the ministry" (he was ordained a clergyman of the Church of England in 1757), he says, "I one evening wandered into a wood, musing on the importance of the office I was going to undertake. I then began to pour out my soul in prayer, when such a feeling sense of the justice of God fell upon me, and such a discovery of His displeasure at sin, as absorbed all my powers, and filled my soul with an agony of prayer for poor lost sinners, and I continued there till the dawn of day." A young man called on the eccentric John Berridge. "Who are you?" he inquired. "A Swiss from the Canton of Berne," was the reply. "From Berne, then probably you can give me some account of a young countryman of yours, one John Fletcher, who has lately preached a few times for the Wesleys, and of whose talents, learning, and piety, they both speak in terms of high eulogy. Do you know him?" "Yes, sir, I know him intimately; and did those gentlemen know him as well, they would not speak of him in such terms, for which he is more obliged to their partial friendship than to his own

merits." "You surprise me," said Berridge, "in speaking so coldly of a countryman, in whose praise they are so warm." "I have the best reason," he rejoined, "for speaking of him as I do. I am John Fletcher." "If you are John Fletcher," replied his host, "you must do me the favour to take my pulpit to-morrow; and when we are better acquainted, without implicitly receiving your statement, or that of your friends, I shall be able to judge for myself." Thus commenced an intimacy with Berridge, which subsequent controversy could not destroy.

Madeley Church, in Shropshire, was the scene of Fletcher's preaching, and in the plain-looking vicarage hard by he lived and studied, wrote and prayed; whilst the parish, containing a degraded, ignorant, and vicious population, employed in mines and ironworks, became under his diligent Christian culture a thoroughly different place. His public discourses, his pastoral conversations, his catechizing of the young, his reproofs to the wicked, his encouragements to the penitent, his accessibility at all hours, his readiness to go out in the coldest night and the deepest snow to see the sick or the sorrowing, his establishment of schools, and his personal efforts in promoting their prosperity, have thrown around Madeley, associations not to be matched by the beautiful hills and hanging woods which adorn that hive of industry. This extraordinary man travelled as often as possible from Madeley to Trevecca, that he might discharge his duties as superintendent of the college there. None were to be admitted as students but such as "were truly converted to God and fully dedicated to His service." They were to stay three years, to have their education gratis, with all the necessaries of life, and "a new suit of clothes every

year." On the completion of their studies, they were allowed to minister either in the Established Church, or in some other Protestant denomination. Joseph Benson, at the time an Oxford student, afterwards an eminent Wesleyan preacher, was associated with Fletcher in the instruction of the students, and he delighted to bear witness to the saintly character of his friend and colleague.*

Like Wesley, Fletcher and Benson differed from Lady Huntingdon and her clerical friends on the subject of the Divine Decrees. Wesley and his coadjutors were Evangelical Arminians. Lady Huntingdon and her Connexion were Calvinists, and in consequence of this diversity of opinion, Fletcher and Benson retired from the College at Trevecca. There can be no doubt that Lady Huntingdon and John Wesley had both of them spirits made to rule, and without adopting the unhistorical and unreasonable theory, that spiritual ambition was the mainspring of their religious activities, it is apparent that, with pure motives, each valued power, and exercised it, as the means of accomplishing other ends. If each had not exercised an unusual amount of authority, it is impossible to understand how they could have accomplished what they did. No wonder that each saw a good deal of egotism in the other; "Trevecca," Wesley wrote to Benson, "is much more, than Kingswood," alluding to his favourite school near Bristol, "is to *me*. 'I' mixes with everything. It is *my* college, *my* masters, *my* students. I could not speak so of this school." Rowland Hill also detected something of the same thing in the admirable lady; and on the

* Benson's "Life of Fletcher" is the chief authority for what we know of him.

other hand, it is not to be wondered at that she and her friends thought they discovered too great an assumption of importance and power on the part of the founder of the Conference.

In 1783 a decisive step was taken which severed almost the last link between the Countess's Connexion and the Episcopal Church of England. An ordination service was held at Spa Fields Chapel on the 9th of March in that year. Two clergymen took part in the service; one called the congregation to witness how the ecclesiastical courts had harassed the clergy officiating in that chapel, and stated that they were therefore compelled to secede from the Establishment; the other clergymen delivered a discourse and offered up prayer. Each took a Bible from the communion table, and then gave it to one of the two candidates, who knelt together according to seniority; hands were laid upon their heads successively, and these words were repeated, "Take thou authority to preach the Word of God, and administer His appointed ordinances, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The service lasted five hours. As Dr. Haweis still identified himself with the Connexion without the surrender of his living, it shows that the decision of the ecclesiastical courts respecting the Spa Fields case was not considered to have settled the question, as to whether co-operation with the Countess affected the legal position of an English incumbent. At all events, Haweis, his wife, Lady Erskine, and a lay gentleman, named Lloyd, were appointed by the Countess trustees of her chapels, houses, and other effects, and they were to appoint successors. The Connexion became not a fixed ecclesiastical body with certain officers, but simply a number of congregations

worshipping in certain buildings, secured for the purpose by her Ladyship's last Testament. She died at the age of eighty-four, in the Chapel House, Spa Fields, June 17, 1791, and was buried at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, clothed with "the white silk dress in which she opened the Chapel in Goodman's Fields. "I am encircled in the arms of love and mercy." "I long to be at home. I shall go to my Father; can He forget to be gracious? Is there any end of His loving-kindness? My work is done, I have nothing to do but to go to my Father,"—were amongst her last words. After her death the college was removed from Trevecca to Cheshunt.

CHAPTER XII.

DURING the forty years embraced within my present review of Methodism, its development in organization and its increase in numbers are manifest and wonderful. It is also plain, and by no means surprising, that with all the desire manifested by the founders to remain in fellowship with the Established Church, it gradually loosened itself from its original moorings, and drifted into the open sea. It has been often imagined, how Methodism might have retained an intimate connection with the Episcopalian system ; how its preachers might have become a distinct but friendly order of agencies within its bounds, and under its authority ; but this could only have happened through the existence of thorough sympathy between the clergy and laity of the Church on the one hand, and the promoters of the great revival on the other. The supposition however of such a state of things is scarcely compatible with the possibility of a strain of spiritual excitement, such as Methodism obviously was, and that from the very necessity of its nature. If the Church could have been Methodistical in spirit, organized Methodism would have had no reason for its existence. As it was, antagonism came to be its inevitable condition of progress. It gained strength by drawing away members from the mother Church of England. Its advance

involved the disintegration of the community out of which it sprang.*

Another fact, which marks the history of Methodism, is equally natural. It was not to be expected that such a religious awakening would be unattended by fanatical excitement. Two instances of that excitement meet us at the outset. One of the early Methodist preachers, named James Wheatley, brought great discredit upon the cause by his disgraceful conduct. After a few years spent in zeal and activity, he fell into an immoral course of life ; and then, whilst at the same time professing penitence and extenuating his faults, he traduced his brethren. Wesley expelled him from all ministerial fellowship, the first act of the kind in the history of the founder ; but Wheatley found friends and followers, and gave great trouble to his former associates. He went to Norwich in 1751 ; preached out of doors, gathered large congregations, united two thousand people into a society, erected a building in imitation of Whitefield's Tabernacles, and raised a commotion in the city, which provoked riots of an extraordinary description. The mob made a coffin, kindled a bonfire, and burned the preacher in effigy amidst the flames. Horrid blasphemies were connected with these acts, yet the wretched rioters shouted in the streets, "Church and King, down with the meetings." Wheatley afterwards became more popular

* "Conventicles are innocuous to the Church, only when the latter rests upon a very energetic and active community of feeling. Thus in Lutheranism, when the Church, in this respect, fell so far short of what was required of it, the pietistic conventicles could only act in a disintegrating and destructive way, against that whereby the members of the Church as such were still held together." (Ritsche's "Crit. Hist. of Scriptural Doctrine of Justification," 330.)

than ever, but again he disgraced himself by his immoralities, was convicted in the ecclesiastical court, had to leave the kingdom, and at last died suddenly in the City of Bristol.

Another cause of offence occurred in 1762. Two preachers entertained extraordinary and almost unintelligible opinions, amounting to the grossest antinomianism, with which they blended pretensions to supernatural inspiration, and boasted that they were oracles of Divine truth. They foolishly proclaimed in January, 1763, "that the end of the world would be on the 28th of February following." In this case there was enthusiasm, but no practical immorality, and the grievance ended by the secession of the two leaders, with about 170 members.

The Conference of 1765 showed that ninety-two itinerant preachers were then in the Connexion, and that the circuits in two years had increased in England from twenty to twenty-five ; in Ireland from seven to eight ; and in Scotland from two to four. At this Conference, one of the minor peculiarities of the system became definitely fixed. Tickets had been used from an early period as tokens of fellowship, but they varied in form and appearance ; now, in accordance with Wesley's minute, as well as comprehensive legislation for the body, which he saw growing larger year by year, uniformity was established in this instance of detail. A small card was prepared with a border, and a text of Scripture printed in the middle, the month and year at the top, and at the bottom the member's name written by the preacher. These were renewed every quarter, the preachers meeting the classes for that purpose. The Methodist communion thus became more definite and compact than ever, and at the same

Conference in which this arrangement was fixed, Wesley recorded a characteristic account of the rise and progress of his great work.

“In 1729, my brother and I read the Bible; saw inward and outward *holiness* therein; followed after it, and incited others so to do. In 1737, we saw, ‘this holiness comes by *faith*.’ In 1738, we saw ‘we must be *justified* before we are sanctified.’ But still holiness was our point, inward and outward holiness. God then thrust us out, utterly against our will, to raise a *holy* people. When Satan could no otherwise prevent this, he threw *Calvinism* in our way; and then *Antinomianism*, which struck at the root both of inward and outward *holiness*. Then many Methodists grew *rich*, and thereby *lovers* of this present *world*. Next they married unawakened or half-awakened wives, and conversed with *their relations*. Hence worldly *prudence*, *maxims*, *customs*, crept back upon us, producing more and more *conformity to the world*. There followed gross neglect of *relative duties*, especially education of children. This is not cured by the preachers. Either they have not *light* or not *weight* enough. But the want of these may be in some measure supplied by publicly reading the sermons everywhere, especially the fourth volume, which supplies them with remedies suited to the disease.” *

The founder of Methodism now asserted authority over the Connexion, which he had drawn together. Preachers had joined him voluntarily; he accepted their services, and superintended their work. People had come to him for spiritual counsel and help; he had arranged them in classes, and over them he maintained religious discipline. Everything was

* Smith’s “Hist. of Methodism,” I. 322.

freely done on both sides. It was a mutual compact ; nobody was enslaved ; and those who did not like the arrangements were free to retire from the body. To keep things together a controlling power was necessary ; this fell on Wesley as a burden, it was not sought by him as a privilege. So he argued ; and knowing what he was, we have no reason to believe that he was influenced by ambition in what he did, that he assumed power for any other purpose than the edification of the people ; but, then, it must be remembered, many ecclesiastics have been quite as *honest* in claiming influence of a more despotic kind ; and it is moreover important to notice that the founder of Methodism rests his case upon expediency, and never appeals to Scripture or ecclesiastical history for the sanction of his sagacious plans.

From the beginning, Wesley had been anxious to bring as many clergymen as possible into co-operation with himself. Several appeared at the early Conferences, but they dropped off, and few remained as his pledged coadjutors. One proved remarkably faithful. William Grimshaw, of Haworth, "was as much a Methodist as Wesley was, with this difference, the former had a church, the latter not." With wonderful ardour he preached from twelve to thirty sermons a week. Round the neighbouring hamlets, over the bleak moors, up the hills, and down the valleys, this self-denying shepherd sought the wanderers, and brought them into the fold. Weather mattered not to him ; amidst rain and hail and snow and frost, with his one coat on his back, and his one pair of shoes on his feet, and a crust of bread in his pocket, he would go out for days and days on his preaching expeditions, sleeping wherever he could

find shelter, and on his return home, spending the night in his own hayloft, to leave room in his parsonage for the entertainment of strangers. As one of Wesley's "assistants" he visited the Methodist classes, held Methodist love feasts, attended Methodist quarterly meetings, and allowed Methodist itinerants to preach in his kitchen.

As the ramifications of the itinerant system spread in all directions, and few of the Clergy would join him, Wesley felt solicitous for its permanence, and accordingly made arrangements for that purpose. After suggesting prudential steps to be taken after his death, he characteristically prepared a declaration to be signed by the preachers as a bond of union. Thus it ran: "To devote ourselves entirely to God, denying ourselves, taking up our cross daily, steadily aiming at one thing,—to save our own souls and them that hear us; —to preach the old Methodist doctrine, and no other, contained in the 'Minutes of the Conference;'—to observe and enforce the whole Methodist discipline laid down in the said 'Minutes.'"

In pursuance of the main object, Minutes of Conference were framed in 1770 as a protest against Antinomianism; as an assertion of the paramount claims of practical religion; and as a censure of minute theological terms, which make a distinction where there is little or no difference. But, in avoiding evils and mistakes of this kind, Wesley fell into a style of expression which it is extremely difficult to harmonize with his habitual mode of teaching the doctrine of Justification. Upon this point his Calvinistic friends immediately fastened; and they did so in a manner which laid them open to grave censure. Instead of asking for an explanation, they pronounced the

doctrines taught in the Minutes as "*a dreadful heresy*," injurious to the fundamental principles of the gospel; they insisted upon a formal recantation, and threatened, if this were refused, to publish a protest against what had just been done. These charges and declarations were conveyed in a letter to the Clergy throughout the three kingdoms, announcing that Lady Huntingdon and other Christian friends, "real Protestants," were to have a meeting at Bristol, in August, 1771, when the Methodist Conference would assemble, and that they meant to go in a body to lay their demands before these brethren. A more unwise proceeding can scarcely be imagined; but the issue of the meeting, which took place according to the determination expressed, was far better than might have been expected. It was acknowledged that the circular was hastily drawn up, and for the offensive expressions employed in it an apology was offered. Wesley, on the other hand, declared his constant and unwavering belief in the old doctrine of Justification by Faith, and contended that the language which he had employed was not inconsistent with it. He does not, however, appear to have acknowledged that some of the propositions he had laid down were open to misconstruction, and therefore required revision. This is to be regretted, and also that he should have mixed up what was personal with what was theological, by saying that he had received ill-treatment from persons who had been under obligations to him, and that the present opposition was not to the Minutes but to him. This threw fresh fuel on the fire, and the charge was met by a simple denial; but, as an exception to what generally occurs in ecclesiastical councils, the two parties on this occasion came to an amicable arrangement; Wesley

and the preachers, with one exception, signing a declaration, that they did not believe in Justification by Works, and the Calvinistic friends, represented by the Rev. Mr. Shirley, acknowledging that they had misapprehended the Minutes, and were satisfied with the Declaration. But the controversy did not end there. After private correspondence and negotiation, differently represented by the two parties, and upon which it would be tedious to enter, Fletcher of Madeley felt it was his duty to write what he entitled "Checks to Antinomianism." His first "Check" vindicated the Evangelical orthodoxy of the Minutes, defended the doctrine of Justification by Works at the day of judgment, asserted the principle of free will, and dwelt upon the evil consequences of Antinomianism. One "Check" after another appeared in consequence of letters written by Richard Hill. The "Checks" amounted to five, and covered a considerable portion of the debatable ground between Calvinists and Anti-Calvinists. The extremely high Calvinistic doctrines of Dr. Crisp came under the merited lash of Fletcher; and he took care to show how they were condemned by Flavel and other Puritan authors. Into the merits of the controversy it is impossible to enter; but respecting it a general remark may be allowed. The combatants are entitled on both sides to a charitable construction of their motives. Fletcher was jealous for the interests of Christian morality, and at the same time maintained the freeness of Divine grace in the salvation of men; and his opponent was jealous for the doctrines of Divine sovereignty, and the unmerited love of God, whilst he shrunk from giving any countenance to practical ungodliness. Each saw evils to be avoided, and good to be accomplished; and became absorbed in the con-

templation of the subject from his own special point of view, without being able to estimate the force of what could fairly be advanced on the other side. Neither party always did justice to views in directions opposite to their own. Fletcher dwelt too much upon the monstrous principles of Crisp, as if they were approved by his antagonist, and his antagonist put meanings upon Fletcher's words, which he repudiated; and with the main points at issue minor ones were mixed up, which only tended to complicate and encumber the dispute.

Whatever may be the theological opinions of any one who has studied the controversy, he must needs admit that Fletcher had the advantage in precision of thought, in skilful reasoning, and in eloquence of expression. Without justifying all his conclusions, whilst demurring to several of his arguments, I must bear witness to the high moral tone and sweet Christian temper of these productions, and not forget to remark that he could and did rise to an elevation above one-sided views, and brought together what in other parts of the discussion were too often torn asunder. He beautifully observes: "If friendship brings the greatest monarch down from his throne, and makes him sit on the same couch with his favourites, may not brotherly love, much more powerful than natural friendship—may not humility excited by the example of Christ washing His disciples' feet—may not a deep regard for that precept, 'He that will be greatest among you, let him be the least of all,' sink the true Christian in the dust, and make him lie in spirit at the feet of every one?"* The dispute unhappily fell into other forms. Toplady published a treatise upon absolute predestination, translated out of Zanchius; and Wesley, for

* "Five Checks to Antinomianism," 133.

the purpose of illustrating the absurdity of the argument, reduced the substance of it to the following form ; appending to it Toplady's initials, as if Toplady acknowledged the caricature as a fact. "The sum of all is this—one in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected ; nineteen out of twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will ; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can. Reader, believe this, or be damned. Witness my hand, A. T."* That so good and wise a man as Wesley should go such a length, shows the perils of theological controversy, and how a strong man may be carried off his feet by the rushing tide of polemic thought. The conclusions expressed, of course his opponents would not admit ; and it is one of the vices of controversy for any person to charge on another doctrines which, however logically they may seem to follow from certain premises, are expressly repudiated by those to whom they are attributed. It was easy, but it only made the fire hotter than before, for Toplady to push, as he did, the other side of the question to an extreme, by striving to make Arminius responsible for Pelagianism, and even Atheism. Toplady did not mend the matter by his counter charge. "In almost any other case, a similar forgery would transmit the criminal to Virginia, or Maryland, if not to Tyburn. The satanic guilt of the person who could excogitate and publish to the world, a position like that, baffles all power of description, and is only to be exceeded (if exceedable) by the satanic shamelessness which dares to lay the black position at the door of other men." To charge Wesley with forgery was absurd, as everybody must know he

* Wesley defended himself in his little tract entitled "The Consequences proved."

did not pretend to give Toplady's signature, but only to indicate, in the strongest manner, that this was the consequence to which he believed his antagonist was led by the doctrines he upheld. Toplady afterwards descended to the vulgarest abuse, and seriously damaged his fame by a scurrilous pamphlet entitled "An Old Fox Tarred and Feathered."

Fletcher continued to co-operate with Wesley, more or less, during the remainder of his life. In 1781 he preached before the Conference at Leeds, and assisted Wesley, with other clergymen, in administering the Lord's Supper in a parish church, his name appears in the Minutes on the preacher's list at different times, and, in 1784, he rose and said, "I have built a chapel in Madeley Wood; and I hope, sir, you will continue to supply it, and that Madeley may still be a part of the circuit. If you please I should be glad to be put down on the Minutes as a supernumerary." At this Wesley was deeply affected. Several preachers burst into tears. Wesley had hoped Fletcher would succeed him as President of the Conference, but the sands of the good man's life ran out the following year.

Before Fletcher's death, another coadjutor came forward to assist John Wesley, and thoroughly to identify himself with Methodism. Thomas Coke was a Welsh gentleman of property, "naturally ambitious and aspiring," educated at Oxford, and there infected with infidel principles.* His faith was established by the writings of Sherlock and other divines; and after ordination, he became curate at South Petherton, in Somersetshire. He met with Wesley, who told him to attend to his parish duties, but he wished for a larger

* Moore, in his "Life of Wesley," gives a full account of Coke. (See Vol. II. 310, etc.)

sphere, and soon formed a sort of Methodist circuit in his own neighbourhood. Addicted to ecclesiastical irregularities, his character and zeal provoked such opposition on the part of his parishioners, that they rung the bells on his removal from the place. He joined the Methodists, through their teaching became "converted" as he had not been before, and entering the Connexion in 1777, took a prominent part in subsequent characteristic measures. When John Wesley took for his motto "the world is my parish," the words embodied the idea of Christian missions on the largest scale ; but Coke became still more distinguished for zeal in foreign work, when he exclaimed, "I want the wings of an eagle and the voice of a trumpet that I may proclaim the gospel through the east and the west, the north and the south." In 1786 he propounded a scheme of missionary operations, including efforts in our Asiatic dominions. He appears in 1790 as chairman of a committee to take charge of "Missions established by the Methodist Society;" and thus was laid a broad basis for subsequent labours. What is called "the Wesleyan Missionary Society" did not arise until many years afterwards, and then came into action chiefly for the purpose of raising funds, but missionary efforts were attempted by Methodists before the establishment of the Baptist and London Missions. Coke pursued his favourite work until the year 1814, when he died at sea.

Another important accession to Wesleyan forces was made in an Irish convert, Adam Clarke. His mother took him to a class-meeting with a result he thus records: "It was necessary that I should have hard travail. God was preparing me for an important work. I must emphatically sell all to get the pearl

of great price. If I had lightly come by the consolations of the gospel, I might have let them go as lightly. It was good that I bore the yoke in my youth. The experience that I learned in my long tribulation was none of the least of my qualifications as a minister of the gospel." *

Such language as a youth, indicated spiritual precocity ; but his judgments at the beginning were confirmed at the end of a long and learned life. Clarke became as remarkable, after he entered the Methodist ministry in 1782, for an exemplary discharge of pulpit and pastoral duties, as for the attainment of vast stores of biblical and other learning. Of the labours and privations of preachers at that time he gives copious details in his reminiscences. With miserable accommodation in the residences attached to the chapels, with long wearisome journeys performed on foot, with hard fare and mean shelter, but a warm welcome, in the cottages of the poor, the good man went on his way, like the humblest of his brethren ; yet at the same time reading to such an enormous extent, and acquiring a knowledge of so many languages, ancient and modern, as to lead any one to suppose that he could have had nothing else to do, and that the seclusion of a college had constantly been at his command.

Three incidents appear in connection with the period between Coke's joining the Methodists, in 1776, and the year 1784, just after Clarke became a Methodist preacher. The first was the building of what may be called the temple or cathedral of Methodism in City Road. Plain and spacious, with deep galleries and studded all over with pews, it remained the same till the late fire, only that from time to time it

* Moore's "Life of Wesley."

gathered round it memories of conferences, meetings, and preachers of unspeakable influence throughout the Methodist world. Nor was the cost of the building a trifle in 1776, when the resolution was formed that it should take the place of the old Foundry. Six thousand pounds could be raised by Methodists then, only by riches of Corinthian liberality abounding in the depths of Corinthian poverty. However, the chapel was completed in 1778, and opened by John Wesley, who preached two sermons, one on part of Solomon's prayer, and another on the hundred and forty and four thousand standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion. A second incident belonging to the year 1777, was the publication of a monthly magazine, first known as *The Arminian*, then as *The Methodist*, and afterwards as *The Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*. It laid strong hold on the whole denomination, especially when periodicals were rare, and Methodist habits of reading, save in exceptional cases like Adam Clarke's, were very limited. Its sermons, essays, and anecdotes had a wonderful charm for readers, old and young. It was the Methodist household book, studied in private and read aloud on Sundays to the children and servants of the family. Nor did the excellent Founder by any means leave this publication to sink or swim, according to its own merits; but enjoined its circulation, sometimes in very dictatorial style. A third incident pertaining to 1783 and 1784 is still more important. Then was framed the Magna Charta of Wesleyanism, "The Deed of Declaration," about which there has been no little debate. The first chapel built for preaching was put in trust according to Presbyterian form; but it was objected, that if the trustees were allowed to name the preacher, they might object to

Wesley himself entering the pulpit. The Deed was cancelled, and the power of appointing preachers became legally entrusted in the Founder's hands. Wesley was identified with the Conference. The Conference was identified with Wesley.

Wesley saw that something more definite was needed for the security of chapel property than had yet been arranged, that according to his own practice and theory—for out of his practice had arisen a theory, the merits of which I shall not discuss—care must be taken to prevent the power of appointing preachers from slipping into the hands of trustees ; and that the legal holding of so many buildings could not be wisely left to an indefinite company of preachers, but needed some restriction as to numbers. “My first thought,” he says, “was to name a very few, suppose ten or twelve persons—Count Zinzendorf named only six—who were to preside over the community after my decease. But on second thoughts, I believed there would be more safety in a greater number of counselors, and therefore decided on having one hundred.” Hence “the legal hundred” appointed by Deed enrolled in Chancery, for holding the estates of the Wesleyan Connexion, and selecting preachers to preach in the chapels and to travel in the circuits. This measure created great agitation ; but the controversy which arose out of it, and which has been renewed again and again at intervals, cannot be discussed in a work like this. First, to determine the point of view from which the controversy is to be considered, and then to enter into an examination of arguments on both sides—which is the only equitable mode of proceeding—would require a volume, and lead us completely out of the path of history. Any

sweeping assertion would be an idle piece of assumption.

The same year which saw the Wesleyan Magna Charta witnessed another important event. The American branch of the communion had rapidly grown; the members numbered about fifteen thousand, yet the sacraments were not administered among them, because of the prevalent idea that Episcopal ordination was required for that purpose. The American Methodists wished for the supply of this defect, and, unable to procure such ordination as they desired in any other way, they turned their thoughts to the Father and Founder, with the hope that he would set apart some ministers, whom they might welcome as administrators of the Lord's Supper. He proceeded in a peculiar way, and his conduct led to a great deal of controversy. On the 2nd of September, 1784, he signed a document containing the following passage:—

“I have appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America, as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, to act as elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord's Supper. And I have prepared a Liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England (I think the best constituted national Church in the world), which I advise all the travelling preachers to use on the Lord's day in all the congregations, reading the Litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the Supper of the Lord on every Lord's day.” *

Coke reached New York in November, and the next month held a Conference at Baltimore, when he and

* Smith, I. 513.

Asbury were by unanimous vote elected general superintendents. Afterwards Coke, assisted by a German clergyman, "set apart" on three successive days, "by imposition of hands and prayer," this same Mr. Asbury, first as deacon, then as elder, then as superintendent. Early in the following year, Charles Wesley wrote to an Episcopal minister a letter full of lamentations, on account of what had been done. "Lord Mansfield," he adds, "told me last year, that ordination was separation. This my brother does not and will not see; or that he has renounced the principles and practices of his whole life, that he has acted contrary to all his declarations, protestations and writings; robbed his friends of their boastings, realized the Nag's Head ordination (consecration?) and left an indelible blot on his name as long as it shall be remembered." In the following August, Charles Wesley addressed to his brother a strong letter to the same effect, which elicited a reply in which John Wesley concluded that he was now no more separated from the Church of England than he had been before, that he submitted still (though sometimes with a doubting conscience) to "wicked infidels." These are his words. Yet he admitted that he varied from the Church "in some points of doctrine, and in some points of discipline," "but not a hair's breadth further than he deemed it his bounden duty."*

It should be observed that John Wesley did not speak of consecrating Bishops. Not a word occurs as to any diocese or see which Coke and Asbury were to occupy. The language throughout is singularly guarded, they were set apart simply as *superintendents*. At the same time no one can feel surprised that Charles

* Smith I. 521.

Wesley and others should have regarded it in the light of consecration; and it is a little remarkable, that when his brother saw how it was regarded, he should not have repudiated an idea which his previously careful phraseology was insufficient to warrant. It must also be confessed that there was something anomalous in first setting Dr. Coke apart as a superintendent by the imposition of hands, and then in Dr. Coke's being elected in America afterwards to that office; more anomalous still was Wesley's appointment of Asbury to be joint superintendent with Coke, and the subsequent setting apart by Coke of Asbury, in the course of three days, to be first a deacon, then a presbyter, and then a superintendent in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Coke assumed the title of Bishop, which Wesley had not given him. Thus he went beyond his commission, and his assumption of Episcopal dignity displeased the simple-minded Founder, whose moral greatness comes out in strong contrast with the small ambition of his well-meaning friend.*

When Wesley had gone so far, it was only consistent to ordain others in a similar way, for different spheres of service. Accordingly we find him recording in his journal respecting the Conference of 1785, "Having with a few select friends weighed the matter thoroughly, I yielded to their judgment, *and set apart* three of our well-tried preachers." Here again, though the act performed was what is always meant by *ordination*, the Founder avoids using the word.† The Methodists

* The ambition of Dr. Coke in early life is noticed by Methodist writers (Moore's "Life of Wesley," II. 310, and Smith's "Methodism," I. 398, and Tyerman, in his "Life of Wesley," III. 44.)

† Pawson, in a letter after Wesley's death, says "he ordained Mr. Mather and Dr. Coke Bishops." (Smith, II. 98.) The state-

in England, becoming more and more desirous for the administration of sacraments by their own ministers, he set apart in 1787, by imposition of hands and prayer, Alexander Mather, Thomas Rankin, and Henry Moore, three men who became leaders when Wesley was gone, for the service of Methodism in England. Mr. Mather he afterwards made a superintendent.

According to the Anglican theory, which both the Wesleys adopted in their early days, and which Charles retained to the last, this setting apart of ministers by the imposition of hands was altogether unjustifiable; but Wesley, as he distinctly states, had given up that theory, and had adopted the idea held by Lord King—and in substance by all Presbyterians and Independents, and even by many Low Churchmen,—that Bishops and Presbyters were, in the beginning, but one order. Wesley considered that an episcopal mode of government—presbyters, with an *episcopus primus inter pares*, is not inconsistent with Scripture, is in full harmony with early practice, and is an arrangement conducive to the order and welfare of a Church; with this conviction, his proceeding in setting men apart by the imposition of hands to the work of the ministry was perfectly consistent. The consistency of his conduct in reference to Coke is another question.

The course thus pursued in his last days, led Churchmen more generally and more decidedly than ever to pronounce John Wesley a Dissenter. He always disliked to be so regarded, seeing that the latter were condemned, as they were, by all authorities of the Church. When what may be called the last,

ment might be accepted in a certain sense: but it was not made in Wesley's characteristic phraseology.

long step of his ecclesiastical life was taken, he became *practically* a Dissenter, however he might be regarded before.

In 1787, November 3rd, he writes in his journal: "I had a long conversation with Dr. Clulow, an attorney, on the execrable Act, called the Conventicle Act. After consulting the Act of Toleration, with that of the tenth of Anne, we were both clearly convinced that it was the safest way to license all our chapels, and all our travelling preachers; and no justice or bench of justices has any authority to refuse licensing either the houses or the preachers."

In other words, he placed the chapels and ministers of Methodism under the protection of "an Act for exempting their Majesties' Protestant subjects, *dissenting* from the Church of England, from the penalties of certain laws." *

This important determination placed Methodism in a new position, and it had its advantages. Rude interruptions of worship had not ceased; congregations were still sometimes disturbed at evening service by young men bringing birds into a chapel and letting them fly, that their fluttering wings might extinguish the candles which served to make darkness visible; but now that Methodist meetings were shielded by the Toleration Act, such persecutions could be stopped by an application of the law. Poverty, however, remained; preachers were treated in some circuits, even by their friends, after the humblest fashion: a room over a gateway served for lodgings, the furniture was of the meanest description, and thongs of leather attached to

* The language of the Act throughout accords with the title. It is for "Dissenting Protestants," people "dissenting from the Church of England."

a chest of drawers were the only means of opening them. But, after a lingering fight of affliction, and a long struggle with the scantiest pecuniary resources, the era of violent conflict and almost utter destitution came to an end; and the record of this circumstance offers a convenient place for noticing the lives and labours of men, amongst the most extraordinary the Church of Christ in England has ever seen.

On turning to "*The Early Methodist Preachers*,"* one of the first things noticeable, is the singularly excitable temperament of some amongst them—a fact which accounts for much of the extravagance with which they are charged. Thomas Olivers, before his conversion, seems to have lived in an atmosphere of strong passions, swept along by a current of profanity. In the parish where he resided, Tregonan, in Wales, he was accustomed to vent most extraordinary outflowings of indignation against all kinds of objects, cursing with the fury of a maniac the winds as they blew, the cattle as they rested in the fields, the trees in the hedges, and the doors of his neighbours' dwellings. He, for a long time before he knew anything of Methodism, was completely beside himself. And this man lived to write the favourite hymn, so full of power and pathos, beginning with the words "*The God of Abraham praise*"—a hymn which Henry Martyn repeated to himself as he saw the shores of England disappearing on his way to India. Another, John Haime, speaks as having been, in his early days, before he knew anything of religion, in a state of conscious slavery to the evil one. He wandered by the river

* Their lives are comprised in six volumes, edited by the Rev. Thomas Jackson, one of the most remarkable collections I ever read.

side, through woods and wild solitary places, looking up to heaven with a broken heart, the devil constantly telling him that no hope was left. He was terrified asleep and awake, thinking that the world was at an end, and that he saw it wrapped in flames. "I wept bitterly," he says, "I moaned like a dove, I chattered like a swallow." George Storey was excitable in another and gentler way. When as a boy he heard the burial service read by a clergyman, he was awestruck with the prospect of eternity; and so tender was his nature, that, having killed a bird, he was filled with remorse, and lay awake for nights, praying with tears the great Creator to forgive his cruelty. He took to all kinds of books—devouring them with amazing eagerness—and states that he recollected reading over three hundred volumes, some of them folios, before he was sixteen. His "passion" in this respect, "was insatiable." The effect which Methodism had on these men was to tame rather than increase the violence of their natural excitability, to deliver them from their tormenting fears, and to inspire them with a peace which often rose superior to their fiery temperament or their constitutional melancholy.

The force of imagination in some of them was surprising, and took at times most poetical forms. Thomas Payne, a native of Gloucestershire, fancied that he saw wild creatures crossing his path. He did not sleep one whole night for thirteen months, without dreadful dreams, but beauty blended itself with terror. "I thought I saw myself standing on the summit of a frightful precipice, whence I was suddenly hurled down headlong through the air, expecting every moment to be dashed in pieces, *when I was turned into a white dove and flew up again.*" In the case of Thomas

Olivers, the poet, what might be a natural phenomenon, was transformed into a blessed pledge of peace, like what Bunyan's pilgrim saw: "As I returned home, just as I came to the bottom of the hill, at the entrance of the town, a ray of light, resembling the shining of a star, descended through a small opening in the heavens, and instantly shone upon me. In that instant my burden fell off, and I was so elevated that I felt as if I could literally fly away to heaven. This was the more surprising to me, as I had always been (what I still am) so prejudiced in favour of rational religion, as not to regard visions or revelations, perhaps, as much as I ought to do. But this light was so clear, and the sweetness and other effects attending it were so great, that though it happened about twenty-seven years ago, the several circumstances thereof are as fresh in my remembrance as if they had happened but yesterday." *

Men who could dream such dreams, and so interpret nature, had a gift which, like Bunyan's, must have mightily helped them in the pulpit and in the preaching fields.

Some had been military men and passed through strange scenes. Payne enlisted in the service of the East India Company; met men-of-war and frigates in his passage out; passed through hurricanes; saw one mate fall overboard, another dashed to pieces by a fall from the mast, a third bitten in two by a shark; and then, after a strange, wandering, adventurous life, settled down into a Methodist preacher, on grounds anything but enthusiastic, even in the estimation of the soberest people. "I desired to join with the people called Methodists." "I saw, to begin with smaller

* "Lives of Early Methodist Preachers," II. 60.

things ; that wherever they came they promoted cleanliness, industry, frugality, and economy, loyalty, conscientious subjection to the king and all that are in authority, and real vital religion, which was well-nigh banished from the earth." *

The miserable pecuniary support and the multiform self-denial of these men seem almost incredible. One example will suffice, and it had better be given in the man's own words. Thomas Taylor, a noted preacher, upon whose death Montgomery wrote his beautiful hymn, beginning with the words "Servant of Christ, well done," thus tells his tale of poverty: "I set out for London, and from thence into Wales. Here my work was rugged and disagreeable enough. I had no quarterage, no travelling expenses, but now and then a shilling or half a crown was put into my hands. Sometimes I was obliged to dine and lodge at an inn, and to pay both for my horse and myself. In this manner I passed the year, preaching as I could, sometimes under cover, and often in the open air, even throughout the winter, which some may remember was very severe. Some time before the Conference, I made an excursion into Caermarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, counties in which none of our preachers had ever set foot. It appeared to me that in Pembrokeshire there was a probability of doing good, as I preached several times in Pembroke town, and in various other places." "I was sent from Leeds Conference back to Pembrokeshire, where everything was quite new ; nor had I one shilling given me, either for the expense of my journey thither, or for my support when I got thither. But it may be said, 'How did you live?' I lived upon my own stock, till Providence raised me

* "Lives of Early Methodist Preachers," II. 288.

friends. I formed a circuit, including about two hundred and fifty persons, by Christmas ; and at the end of the year I went to the London Conference, but still at my own expense, except some small matters which a friend here and there might give me, which could not amount to much, as the people were generally poor. From the Conference at London I was appointed for Castlebar, in Ireland. Here for the first time I received thirty shillings from Conference, for my expenses on the way. Fifteen shillings I paid for a place on the outside of the coach to Bristol, besides the expenses on the road, twenty-seven shillings I paid the captain for my passage to Dublin, besides provision, mate, sailors, etc. When I got to Dublin, I had about a hundred miles to travel to Castlebar, and even there my allowance was very short. I think when I left Wales, my stock was about thirty pounds. It was considerably reduced by the time I got to Castlebar. I stayed two years in Ireland ; and from Limerick I came to the Manchester Conference. My stock of money was now reduced to about fifteen guineas. It was thought there was a probability of raising a society in Glasgow, and I was appointed to make trial ; and out of my fifteen guineas I gave nine pounds for a horse, saddle, etc. I received from the Conference three guineas to take me to Glasgow, a place where we had no society, no place to receive me, no place to preach in, strong prejudices to oppose, and a long, cold dark winter before me."

The adventures of these men were most remarkable. They met with hair-breadth escapes from drowning, from perishing amidst storms and pitfalls in wintry journeys, and especially from the murderous violence of mobs, when the preachers resembled the Apostle Paul

who fought with beasts at Ephesus. But their circumstances in many places changed as time rolled on. A contrast is presented between the stories told by some of them at the beginning and at the close of their career. Thomas Taylor, speaking of his young days, relates how a preacher at Bristol said to him,—“ ‘ You seem pretty well dressed, and will hold out well enough for a year, but must expect nothing to buy any more clothes when those are worn out.’ I went on till after Christmas, and endured a good deal of hardship from hunger and cold, especially in passing those dreadful mountains from Neath to Brecon, which are nearly forty miles over, and have a most dismal aspect in winter. On these I travelled a long way, and saw neither house nor field, hedge nor tree ; nor yet any living creature, excepting here and there a poor sheep or two, nor scarcely any visible track to know my way by.” It is interesting to find him telling a very different story in his old age, as he records a journey amongst the Cornish Methodists. “ There would be no great cross,” he says, “ in itinerating in this manner, where in every place all things we wish for are made ready to one’s hand. Groups of kind friends waiting in every place to receive one, and crowds assembling to hear, are exceedingly pleasing ; and all the company in every friend’s house looking up to one as to a superior species of being.” *

In perusing the lives of these men, we meet with sensational excitement, with boisterous expressions of feeling, with ascriptions of sin to Satanic agency, when we might more truly trace it home to the human heart ; and with ideas of special judgments and of special favour in daily events. But we must take into account

* “ *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers,*” V. 18, 94.

the conflicts through which these preachers passed, such as we in these days amidst home comforts can scarcely imagine; the persecutions they encountered, their consequent absorption in one thing, which narrowed whilst it elevated their range of vision; and, above all, the heated religious atmosphere in which they travelled and laboured. Nor let it be overlooked that where fanaticism existed it took the side of morality, not immorality, of practical religion, not Antinomianism, of unworldliness, not fashion and self-indulgence, of spiritual faith, not earthly ambition. Minds might mistake their own imaginings for Divine revelations, they might misinterpret the grammatical meaning of Holy Scripture; but a conviction that the things not seen are eternal, and that Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, had in their minds supreme, habitual, all-mastering power, and "e'en the light that led astray was light from heaven."

Amongst such men, John Wesley, Fellow of Lincoln, a classical scholar, a learned Divine, a man of accomplishments, spent the years of a long life on terms of intimate friendship, and whilst ruling them as their superior, he treated them as his brothers, or as his sons. Stories used to be told, sixty years ago, how in venerable age he walked the streets, accompanied by a couple of these worthies; how he would take them to the houses of poor old women, and with the consideration of a gentleman, put up with little inconveniences, sometimes too much for his humbler companions; how he would ride with them by day and occasionally share the same bed at night, and all for the spiritual good of his fellow-creatures.* The grandfather of the present

* I remember hearing, when I was a child at Norwich, of his once having presented to him, by a humble Christian woman, as

Sir Robert Peel, when residing at Bury, in Lancashire, invited Mr. Wesley to breakfast with him. He agreed, on condition that he might bring *some of his children* with him. This was granted, and he went to the manufacturer's home with six-and-thirty of his itinerants.*

His appearance in latter days must have been singularly impressive, judging from portraits and traditions. Whilst the associations which gathered round him for years before his death made him a sight worth seeing; his cheerful countenance, his winning smile, his long grey locks, and his blended dignity and gentleness made him an object of special love and admiration to the young. Southey once said to a Methodist preacher, "I was in a house in Bristol where he was, when a mere child. On running down stairs before him, with a beautiful little sister of my own, whose ringlets were floating over her shoulders, he overtook us on the landing, when he took my sister in his arms and kissed her. Placing her on her feet again, he then put his hand upon my head, and blessed me; and I feel," continued the bard, highly impassioned—his eyes glistening with tears, yet in a tone of grateful and tender recollection—"I feel as though I had the blessing of that good man upon me at the present moment."†

he and another preacher sat on the side of a bedstead, a basin of broth sweetened with sugar. Wesley's companion did not know how to swallow such a mess. "Brother," said he, "if you refuse, it will hurt her feelings. I have eaten mine." Again, he lay down one night with a travelling preacher, who thought what a privilege it would be to hear his conversation, and began to put questions. "Brother," said Wesley, "I came to bed to sleep, not to talk."

* Tyerman's "Life of Wesley," III. 499.

† Everett's "Life of Dr. Clarke," I. 259. My own mother often boasted of having, when a child, been taken up in the old man's arms and kissed by him.

Few men have lived like John Wesley, and few have died like him. In a small house beside the yard in front of City Road Chapel, he took his departure out of the world. We are told that he dozed and wandered, but in his wanderings was always preaching or meeting classes. He seldom spoke; but once, in a wakeful interval, exclaimed, "There is no way into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus. 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.' That is the foundation, the only foundation, there is no other."

After a restless night, being asked if he suffered pain, he answered, "No," and began singing,—

"All glory to God in the sky.
And peace upon earth be restored !
O Jesus, exalted on high,
Appear our Omnipotent Lord.
Who, meanly in Bethlehem born,
Didst stoop to redeem a lost race,
Once more to Thy people return,
And reign in Thy kingdom of grace.'

"I want to write," he said. A pen was put into his hand. "I cannot," he exclaimed. "Let me write for you. Tell me what you wish to say," said Miss Ritchie. "Nothing," he replied, "but that God is with us. The best of all is, God is with us." Lifting up his dying arm in token of victory, and raising his feeble voice he again repeated the heart-reviving words, "The best of all is, God is with us." "Pray and praise," again and again he repeated. "Farewell, farewell," he uttered, as he shook hands with all around his dying bed. "The clouds drop fatness," he went on to say, as he felt heavenly strength shed upon him, "as showers that

water the earth." After a pause came the watchwords, "The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." Scores of times he strove to say, "I'll praise, I'll praise;" but nature failed. "Farewell," was the last word on his lips, as he passed away "in the presence of his brethren," Wednesday, March 2, 1791,* between three and four months before the Countess of Huntingdon.

His corpse was carried into City Road Chapel a day before the funeral; his face, even in death, beaming with a heavenly smile. The crowds that came to see him were so great that, to prevent accidents, it was arranged he should be buried between five and six the next morning, and that the hour should not be known till late the night before. Nevertheless, hundreds attended, and as the Burial Service was read, the word *father* substituted for the word *brother* so excited the congregation that many burst out into loud weeping.

Before we leave Wesley in his earthly resting-place one word may be added as to his preaching. It was very popular, much more so than is generally supposed. His fame in one respect has eclipsed his fame in another; but there is reason to believe, if he had never organized the Methodist body, he would have made an ineffaceable impression on the mind of England by his living voice. History, tradition, and a stream of invisible influence would have preserved his name as the most illustrious of preachers, next to one already described. But Wesley was of a different order from Whitefield. There is an eloquence which has in it nothing rhetorical, with no dramatic power, no melting pathos, and yet it penetrates, subdues, and leads away captive. Calm, strong, deliberate, invincible conviction

* Moore's "Life," II. 388-394; Tyerman, III. 652.

expressed in every sentence evokes sympathy. Wesley's pulpit power must have been of that description.

The fortunes of Methodism after his death were exceedingly critical. At the Conference in 1791, it must have been very affecting to see the chair so long occupied by the Founder left vacant, and to have for the first time to elect a successor to the post of President. The honour and responsibility fell to the lot of a preacher of reputed experience, judgment, and sagacity, named Thompson. At this Conference it was determined, "for the preservation of our whole economy as the Rev. Mr. Wesley left it, that the three kingdoms should be divided into districts : England into nineteen, Scotland into two, and Ireland into six ; and that district meetings should be held, consisting of preachers in full connection, who were to choose a chairman, and to act as an authoritative committee, having a power of final decision in any case of ecclesiastical dispute, until the meeting of the next Conference." This completed the machinery of Methodism, which began with class-meetings and expanded into circuits. Soon the question arose about ordination and the administering of sacraments ; and it was found, that after the presiding spirit had been withdrawn, elements of division previously in existence began to develop in two distinct and powerful parties—one for continuing things as they were, another for alterations in harmony with the Founder's latest measures. It is manifest that his earlier policy had been to avoid separation from the Church of England ; but latterly his conduct, in spite of his professions, had leaned on the side of Dissent ; at any rate he had ordained ministers outside the Establishment, whom he appointed to administer the sacraments. Hence, some

followers were anxious to maintain his earlier conservatism ; whilst others were anxious to complete and perfect his organizations, though at the expense of real separation from the Church. The matter of ordination was settled in 1792, by the rule, that ordination should not take place without the consent of Conference, and that a breach of this rule should entail exclusion from the Connexion.*

The question as to administering sacraments was not so easily solved. Here two distinct parties made their appearance. The first consisted chiefly of leading laymen, trustees of chapels, who retained a good deal of old-fashioned Episcopalian feeling, and wished Wesleyanism to be, "if not a pillar inside, at least a buttress outside the Church of the nation." They preferred to receive the Lord's Supper at the hands of episcopally ordained clergymen, and so to keep up a connection with the parish churches. Strong expressions of attachment to the national Establishment so often employed by their spiritual Father of course formed the stronghold of their cause. The second party consisted chiefly of preachers and a large body of the people—the commonalty of Methodism—who preferred receiving the Lord's Supper at the hands of those whom they regarded as their spiritual guides, and who, moreover, in numerous cases, shrank from approaching the parish altars, where they found many an immoral communicant, and perhaps a clergyman who did not command respect. The contest between the two sections was increased by a suspicion in some quarters that a few preachers were aiming to establish a Methodist hierarchy. But an amicable termination of the dispute was reached at the Conference of 1795.

* Minutes for 1792 ; and Smith's "Methodism," II. 18.

A plan of pacification was devised to this effect—that the Lord's Supper should not be administered in any chapel, except a majority of trustees, and a majority of stewards and leaders should allow it; and that the consent of the Conference should be obtained. It was also provided that, wherever the Communion had been already "peacefully administered," the administration of it should be continued. It is remarkable that a compromise which does not rest upon any deep ecclesiastical principle should have brought peace; but it shows how strong must have been the bonds of sympathy which could keep so large a community together, under arrangements so frail, and so likely, without love, to burst asunder. It was in this particular—brotherly love—that the old Methodists were so mighty and invincible.

A painful personal dispute arose, however, in connection with the sacrament controversy. A young minister, named Alexander Kilham, advocated what he considered to be plans of reform, regarded by elder brethren as involving a revolution. Here again comes up a question of domestic ecclesiastical polity, the settlement of which depends on the point of view adopted for its examination. Methodists and those who are not Methodists can scarcely be expected to reach the same conclusion on a point of this nature. I therefore pass it over; but the personal element of the controversy requires a remark. Alexander Kilham was a man of ability, of great zeal, of honest purpose; but he was rash, and did not go the way to work to accomplish what he attempted. He reflected, to some extent, on the character of Wesley, and to a greater extent on the character of some of his brethren. When thousands of hearts were bleeding with sorrow for an

irreparable loss, even slight reflections on what was regarded as almost unexampled excellence, were likely to exasperate. At the same time the way in which he spoke of some of his brethren was calculated to provoke unfriendly feeling, and to disturb the Connexion to which he belonged. At first he was censured at the Conference in 1792, yet allowed to remain on the preachers' list; afterwards he issued anonymously offensive circulars, and in them he brought grave charges against Methodist preachers. At the Conference in 1796, he was accused of having stated what was not true; and his trial ended in his expulsion from the body. He laid the basis of what is called the New Connexion; a highly respectable body, well known in the religious world of after times.

It is gratifying to add, on closing the record of Methodism in the eighteenth century, that the controversies raised after the death of Wesley do not seem to have interrupted the spiritual work which he commenced. A great revival in Yorkshire was reported in 1794; and a visit by Joseph Benson into Cornwall is described as producing a powerful religious impression. Thirty-six years afterwards it is referred to by one living in the neighbourhood as "deep and hallowed beyond example." * "If Methodism," says the author of "Wesley's Life and Times," † "does not exist in Palestine, Asia Minor, Arabia, Greece, or Egypt, it exists in Britain, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Africa; and, passing to other regions which the Romans never trod, it has long since entered India and Ceylon; it has already won its triumphs in the flowery land of the Chinese; it has a vast multitude of adherents in

* Smith, II. 44.

† Vol. I. 3, 9.

Australia and the islands of the Pacific Ocean ; and in the West Indies its converts are numbered by tens of thousands ; while in America it has diffused its blessings from the most remote settlements of Canada in the north, to the Gulf of Mexico in the south, and from Nova Scotia in the east to California in the west." "We must make a total of more than twelve millions of persons receiving Methodist instruction, and, from week to week, meeting together in Methodist buildings for the purpose of worshipping Almighty God. The statement is startling, but the statistics given entitle it to the fullest consideration." The rise and progress of Methodism may be regarded as the most important ecclesiastical fact of modern times, and requires to be studied in relation to the Established Church of England, the old Nonconformist bodies, and the missionary interests of Christianity throughout the world, by every one who would understand the religious history of the last hundred years.

Beyond its vitality and diffusion Methodism in its history is important and suggestive. Methodism might, at least to a large extent, have been preserved as so much vital force within the national Church ; but it was not allowed a place within its precincts. By a hard, narrow, unsympathetic, and exclusive policy, Methodists, like the Puritans, were forced into a position outside ; the same policy which ejected so many clergymen at the Restoration, threw off the Wesleyan revivalists, and thus vastly increased the sections of dissent in point of numbers. At the same time this policy strengthened and developed the principles which these sections of the Church embodied. At last it placed them in an attitude towards the Establishment far beyond that which the leaders originally contem-

plated. Of course the method adopted was meant to strengthen and preserve the Church, but it had an opposite effect. It perpetuated and promoted Non-conformity. What was employed as a means of union and consolidation operated as a solvent, and separated from the Church the most active elements of the Church's religion. This might have been foreseen in 1662: they must have been blind indeed who did not perceive it a century afterwards.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE name of Presbyterian came to be more loosely applied than ever during the last half of the eighteenth century ; and no wonder, since Presbyterians and Independents were closely associated, and, in some cases, a minister of the one denomination took the oversight of a congregation belonging to the other. The Clergy who retained the Presbyterian name were independent in ecclesiastical action, perhaps even more so than their brethren ; and this arose from the fact, that the people in the one case had less power than the people in the other. An Independent Church, worked on its own distinctive principle, was very much of a democracy. The people were the sources and the agents of power. They had their Church meetings, where they discussed questions respecting their affairs and determined the result by popular vote. The admission of members and the exercise of discipline rested with the community ; the pastor, of course, having personal influence in the spiritual republic. But a Presbyterian congregation claimed and exercised no republican rights. The people chose their pastor, and when they had done so, they left the management of Church business very much in his hands. They did not hold meetings for discussion, or in order to admit and suspend communicants.

The relinquishment of congregational power has been assigned as a reason for ministerial deviations from orthodoxy. The circumstance, perhaps, may account for it thus far, that guidance being implicitly left to the man of their choice, he had free scope for his theological inquiries, and plenty of room for the sway of his opinions. When heterodox sentiments appeared, they sprang from the pulpit rather than from the pew. The congregation did not innovate upon old creeds and customs ; the pastor was left to take the lead. He started what they might think novelties, but by respectful attention to his arguments they came by-and-by to adopt his conclusions. The shepherd went before, the flock followed. No despotism was claimed on the one hand, or admitted on the other. A Presbyterian minister did not impose his beliefs, but appealed to the understanding and judgment of his hearers. Free inquiry was the watchword ; liberty of thought was extolled ; necessarily however, under the circumstances, the persuasive influence of a learned and beloved instructor would be very great.

There is a marked difference between Presbyterians and the members of an Episcopalian establishment. The former attached no authority to the teaching of other days, nor did they care for uniformity of belief, whereas the latter did, and that most decidedly. Not that Presbyterians were destitute of reverence for the past. They never threw overboard old traditions ; but their reverence was restricted to the character, spirit, and temper of Reformers and Puritans ; it extended not to their opinions. They paid no attention to Westminster Confessions and Catechisms, to Declarations of Faith, and Articles of Agreement ; but they had a profound respect for the Westminster Assembly,

and for Puritan confessors under the Stuart dynasty. They valued them, more for what they had thrown off, than for what they had preserved. With a strong, one-sided tendency, they exalted the memory of their fathers, as pioneers of free inquiry ; but those fathers, could they have risen from the grave, would scarcely have accepted the kind of admiration sometimes bestowed on them by their sons.

Unlike Episcopalians, the modern Presbyterian body did not aim at uniformity, either in faith or in practice, though there was more of uniformity in worship and methods of government than in opinions respecting points of divinity. Their love of free inquiry prevented them from attaching much importance to any consentaneous maintenance of religious sentiment. They thought of errors which ought to be exploded, more than of truths remaining to be learnt. Throwing off the checks of the past, they fancied there was no limit to future discoveries. Full of hope, they were as daring as they were sanguine. They launched their barks on perilous waters, and whither they were drifted, we shall see as we proceed.

One of the first things which here arrests the student is the remarkable degree and extent of mental culture in the Presbyterian denomination. In accordance with their love of inquiry, was their diligence in education. Presbyterian names for about half a century are conspicuous in English literature and science. Price and Priestley were amongst the most distinguished scientific men of the age in which they lived ; also Chandler occupied a high place amongst literary celebrities. Kippis, too, was one of the Presbyterian *literati*, well known as the editor of the "*Biographia Britannica*," and as a large contributor to the historical and philo-

logical pages of a once popular work, "The New Annual Register." Another of the same period, little known to fame, but, if report be true, a very extraordinary man, was George Walker, educated at Newcastle, in the same school as Lord Eldon and his brother Lord Stowell. He settled at Durham, Leeds, and Yarmouth, and then removed to Warrington, where he became tutor in the Presbyterian Academy. His mathematical attainments are reported to have been wonderful; and some of his hymns are still remembered. He was an antiquary and a man of taste; and, at Manchester, the Literary and Philosophical Society elected him as President. Though he published little, he was one of those men whose names, when they are gone, gather round them a nimbus of intellectual glory. All these five, Price, Priestley, Chandler, Kippis, and Walker, were Fellows of the Royal Society.

Dr. Taylor, the Presbyterian minister at Norwich, and afterwards tutor at Warrington, who died in 1761, was distinguished not only by his numerous works on controversial and practical divinity, but by his attainments as an Oriental scholar, of which his Hebrew-English Concordance is a proof. Dr. Furneaux, a learned London Presbyterian, author of "Letters to Blackstone," respecting certain positions in his "Commentaries," may be added to the list; and also the accomplished Dr. Aiken, first classical, and then theological tutor at the Warrington Academy. Gilbert Wakefield, another literary name, is also connected with the Presbyterianism of Warrington and Hackney; inasmuch as, after his secession from the Church of England, he became a teacher at both places. In the course of a life filled with strange adventures, he pub-

lished a number of classical works, marred, no doubt, as in Priestley's case, by the rapidity of production ; indeed, a want of careful accuracy was not uncommon in this school of authors.

But the taste cultivated by the Presbyterians spread far beyond this range of authorship. In certain cities and towns there are fondly preserved traditions of bright and pleasant literary circles three or four generations ago. If I may here venture to intrude my own recollections, let me mention the Taylors, the Martineaus, and the Aldersons of Norwich, in the first quarter of the present century, descendants of eminent Presbyterians whose memories they cherished with reverence and love.

Next to their culture, was their advocacy of freedom. They, more than the Independents, were the "political Dissenters" of the age. Price and Priestley we have already seen in that capacity. They were esteemed by Burke and others as leaders in the vanguard of progress, or rather, as such critics thought, of revolution and ruin. They hailed the beginning of the French Revolution as the dawn of European freedom ; and though they did not condemn a limited monarchy, but prized the liberties of the English Constitution, they hoped to see them more fully developed. Especially did they desire an equality of political rights, and earnestly did they contend for what has been since obtained, the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. That which in one age is resisted as an extravagant demand, is in another paid as a righteous debt. Kippis laid aside his huge folios to write "A Vindication of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers, with regard to their late Application to Parliament," and this brought him into controversy with Tucker

Dean of Gloucester. It is pleasant to witness the courtesies of literature observed in the midst of this new discussion, unlike the personal animosity which so often mingles in such conflicts. "Dr. Tucker is the ablest apologist for the Church of England," says Kippis. "You, sir," replies the latter, "appear to me in the light of a very able advocate for your cause ; and, what is much better, but which, alas ! can be said of a very few controversial writers, in the light of an honest man ; you are on the whole a candid and impartial searcher after truth."* Dr. Furneaux, already mentioned, was another zealous champion on the side of civil and religious liberty ; and in that capacity his name appears in the minutes of the Deputies of the three denominations. When, in 1767, the important cause between the elected Sheriff Evans and the Corporation of London came on for hearing, and Lord Mansfield delivered his famous judgment, Furneaux was present, and brought home *memoriter* the whole speech ; and that with such accuracy, that when the report was submitted to his lordship, he found only two or three trifling errors to correct.† Dr. Amory, pastor of the Old Jewry congregation, is particularly noticed for his disapproval of subscription to human formularies.‡

A community so devoted to intellectual pursuits, and to the interests of free inquiry, would be sure to provide for the education of their families and of the rising ministry. They supported an Academy, under

* "Letters to the Rev. Dr. Kippis," by J. Tucker, D.D., p. 5.

† "Proceedings of the Deputies," 31 ; Wilson's "Dissenting Churches," I. 119.

‡ "Brit. Biog.," I. 175-177 ; written by Kippis, a friend of Amory.

Dr. Jennings, who presided over it eighteen years, and was assisted by Dr. Savage, who delivered lectures at his residence in Wellclose Square. When Jennings died in 1762, the seminary was provided for in the village of Hoxton, and Savage became theological teacher and principal. With him, Kippis and Rees were associated. The tutors were of different theological opinions, and Independents and Presbyterians were united in the support as well as in the administration of the establishment; soon differences arose, and after a time the whole scheme of education was abandoned. Hoxton Academy being dissolved, another was formed at Hackney; and at that place was Kippis principal tutor in 1786. Gilbert Wakefield, just now mentioned, a man of advanced opinions, became associated with him; also Thomas Belsham, who had been both student and professor in Doddridge's Academy. Belsham had been instructed in Calvinistic principles, afterwards he forsook the faith of his fathers, and embraced views of a widely different character.

From London we turn to the provinces. Lancashire had been the stronghold of Presbyterianism during the Civil Wars and the Commonwealth; and its name and traditions were widely cherished among the Nonconformists of that part of England. They determined to have an institution for educating their ministers, such as should surpass all others; and resolved to elect "tutors of known ability and good character in theology; moral philosophy, including logic and metaphysics; natural philosophy, including mathematics; and in the languages and polite literature." They elected the claimant of the Willoughby title and barony as their President, and John Holt, a representative of the Worsleys, an old and honourable Nonconformist family,

as their Vice-president. The Academy was instituted at Warrington. Great credit for public spirit is due to those who commenced the enterprise. The first professor they elected was Dr. Taylor of Norwich, the Hebraist, with whom was associated a tutor in mathematics and natural philosophy : the person invited to the chair of languages and elegant literature, declined the invitation. The number of pupils at first was only three, one alone engaged in divinity studies : then we read of five—but altogether, during its whole continuance, the Academy received nearly four hundred young men. Dr. Taylor was not successful in the administration of affairs. The trustees turned out more troublesome than the students ; nor did the principal get on well with his colleague. Taylor died suddenly in 1761, worn out, it was thought, by the vexations of his latter days, and Dr. Aiken succeeded him as president ; the classical chair was occupied by Priestley. After other changes, the Institution was dissolved in 1783. Of nearly four hundred students, several became eminent in the medical and legal profession, but only about six “rendered any service to the Presbyterian interest of the country.” A Presbyterian Academy arose in 1786, at Manchester, and was afterwards transferred to York ;* and another Nonconformist Institute existed at Carmarthen in Wales, whither, after other migrations, it had been finally transferred from Gloucestershire. Being under the care of a succession of ministers who had lived in different places, it had followed them from one abode to another. Dr. Jenkyn Jenkins conducted it at Carmarthen, until he removed to London

* Halley’s “Lancashire, its Puritanism and Nonconformity,” II. 395-410. An account of these Academies is also given by Bogue and Bennet in their “History of Dissenters,” II. 531-535.

in 1779; Robert Gentleman succeeded him in 1780; but changes in the religious opinions of the teacher alienated the Independents who had joined in its support, and at last it fell entirely into Presbyterian hands.

As might be expected from their disregard of uniformity in opinion, and their zeal for freedom of thought, great diversities of judgment obtained in the denomination now described. Orthodoxy of the old-fashioned type did not totally disappear; but Dr. Langford is "said to have been, in the latter part of his life, the only Presbyterian minister in London who retained the faith of the [earlier] Nonconformists." Whether this statement be correct or not, it shows that at least one metropolitan pastor of the denomination held substantially the same doctrine as his Puritan predecessors had done. It is stated by Dr. Gibbons, in a Funeral Sermon for Langford, that his views of the doctrines of the gospel were what are generally termed Calvinistical; not that he called any man master on earth, but the sentiments which appeared to him to be contained in the Bible, and which he deduced from it, agreed on the whole with the tenets of the Genevan Reformer. Finally Langford is seen at the Independent Meeting, King's Weigh-house, Little Eastcheap, first as colleague, and next as sole pastor.* He lived on the debatable ground between Presbyterianism and Independency; and perhaps his ultimate identification with the latter may be attributed to his disapproval of latitudinarian tendencies, manifested by the former. Be that as it may, he was orthodox whilst occupying a Presbyterian pulpit in Silver Street; and

* Wilson's "History of Dissenting Churches," I. 183; see also Vol. III. 68.

probably other examples might be found in provincial Churches.

In Shrewsbury there occurs an instance closely approaching to that now cited. Visitors are reminded by the Guide Book, that Job Orton was born there. The Presbyterian Meeting-house where he officiated is pointed out in High Street; there Coleridge once preached, and Hazlitt walked from Wern to hear his friend. Amongst the monuments in old St. Chad's, one—recently modernized and carefully preserved, in perpetuation of Orton's memory—claims, in the estimation of local antiquaries, particular notice. Orton was a favourite student in Doddridge's Academy; and the memoirs which he wrote of his master show how he loved him, and how he admired his character and work. Orton's name is almost inseparably entwined around Doddridge's; and in piety, candour, and moderation he strongly resembled his instructor. Also with Baxter he has been brought into connection by Kippis, who says, Orton had a considerable resemblance, in certain respects, to that famous divine. But it has been justly remarked, that there was a formality in Orton, to which no resemblance can be detected in Baxter; that the one was as calm as the other was impassioned; "that the souls of the two men were cast in totally different moulds;" and that "Baxter would have set the world on fire while Orton was lighting a match."* Theologically however, there existed a similarity between Orton and Doddridge, and between Orton and Baxter. Neither Doddridge nor Baxter were one-sided in their investigations, and in the results at which they arrived. They looked at religious truth under various aspects, and at the relation

* Orme's "Life of Baxter," 772.

in which one principle stands to another. They sought to harmonize what appeared contradictory, and to employ reason in the explanation of religion. Orton attempted to do the same; but he was less doctrinal in his reflections and lessons than either of his predecessors. He did not strive to disentangle metaphysical webs, like Baxter; or to set out in array dogmas and difficulties, like Doddridge. He confined himself very much to the plainest truths and most practical precepts. His sermons, expositions, and other writings are pervaded by a tone of reverence, faith, conscientiousness, candour, and charity; but there lacks that "evangelical unction" which touches our hearts as we peruse the pages of Doddridge—still more when we read the works of Baxter.

The first example of a marked divergence occurs in Taylor's "Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin." Taylor's standpoint was a Pelagian one. He had no patience with Augustine's theology. He did not believe that men came into the world with a sinful nature; he believed that the moral evil of their lives may be accounted for by the influence of example, the state of society, and the like; that if the innocent Adam in paradise, not surrounded by corrupting influences, yielded to temptation and fell, no wonder that individuals, encompassed by the wickedness of others, should yield to the power of temptation; and that no native corruption is necessary to account for this. As to the "death" spoken of by Paul in the 5th of Romans, Taylor understands it to mean simply temporal death, as inflicted on Adam; and he maintains that there was no federal relationship between him and his posterity, no such connection as Augustine and others have taught, but that human beings are treated

as individuals, according to their personal acts ; and that physical death and other afflictions and sorrows, though they be consequences of our first parents' transgression, are also arrangements made by a merciful Providence for the chastisement of mankind with a view to their amendment. They are not punitive, but remedial. He grants the degeneracy of mankind as undeniable, but maintains that men have still power to do their duty, and that, taking the gospel into account, our condition is happier than Adam's. He objects strongly to the "federal headship" of our first parent, and contends against the doctrine of original righteousness, as held by some divines.

It would be turning this history into a polemical treatise to criticise such a theory ; the reader is referred to the elaborate reply written by the renowned American metaphysician, Jonathan Edwards, where will be found ideas as Augustinian as Taylor's are Pelagian. But I may remark, from the historical point of view, that whilst Taylor diverged widely from earlier Presbyterian opinions on this mysterious subject, he still regarded the condition of mankind as affected by the conduct of Adam ; he still believed that death and sorrow had entered our world through his "primary fault." In these latter respects he upheld a theology since abandoned by those who have adopted and followed his tendencies ; and also, it should be noticed, that in arriving at what Evangelical divines will regard as erroneous results, he reached them by orthodox lines of inquiry, for he professed only to follow Scripture. He did not set up his own philosophy against the authority of St. Paul, but acknowledging his inspiration, contended that the Apostle's teaching is opposed to principles which since his time crept into the Church.

Edwards, and others, denied his conclusions, and contended that they were based upon "misapprehension of the Epistle to the Romans;" but no controversy arose between Taylor and Edwards or anybody else, as to the existence of a Divine Revelation in the New Testament, and the obligation of Christians to bow to the apostolic oracles.

Dr. Price, in the same spirit—as appears from his Sermons on Christian Doctrine—maintained great reverence for Scripture, but proceeded upon a track of investigation different from that chosen by Taylor. Price devoted himself, not to the study of that which rendered the gospel necessary, but to the contents of the gospel itself. He reached conclusions of a peculiar kind.

His idea was, that the core of the gospel may be found in the words, "*Eternal life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour*;" and with that he remained "perfectly easy, with respect to the contrary opinions which are entertained about the dignity of Christ; about His Nature, Person, and Offices, and the manner in which He saves." Theories, Trinitarian or Anti-Trinitarian, Calvinistic or Arminian, Augustinian or Pelagian, he deemed matters of such subordinate importance, that whichever might be adopted, it need not imperil the simple faith, that "Christ did rise from the dead, and will raise us from the dead; and that all righteous penitents will, through God's grace in Him, be accepted and made happy for ever." But Price had a theory of his own respecting the points in dispute between different schools of theology; he called it the middle scheme between Calvinism and Socinianism. As for himself, he believed that Christ was more than a human being; that His conception was miraculous; that His character was im-

maculate ; that He existed in the glory of the Father before His incarnation ; that He exchanged that glory for the condition of a man, to encounter the difficulties of life, and to suffer death upon the cross ; that He was God's Minister in creation, and thus sustained a particular relation to those whom, by His future gracious agency, He was to create anew. Price also said that the "doctrine of Christ's simple Humanity, when viewed in common with the Scripture account of His exaltation, implies an inconsistency and improbability which falls little short of an impossibility." He strongly objected to the Socinian scheme, without adopting any Arian hypothesis.

As to the manner in which Jesus Christ accomplished the salvation of the world, Price did not believe that He was merely a teacher. "Our race," he says, "as sinful and mortal creatures, required more than instruction. Instruction could only bring us repentance. It could not make repentance the means of remission, or an exemption from the effects of guilt. It could not create a fitness that offenders should be favoured, as if they had never offended. It could not raise from death, or restore to a new life." He explicitly declares that the language of Paul signifies more than that our Lord died to seal the covenant of grace, and to assure us of pardon. "He explains Paul's meaning to be, that as the sacrifices under the law of Moses expiated guilt, and procured remission, so Christ's shedding His blood, and offering up His life, was the means of remission and favour to penitent sinners." This author refused to say anything of *Substitution* or *Satisfaction*, or of any theological explanation as to the *manner* in which we are redeemed. Some of these explanations he deemed absurd, and he was persuaded

that his interest in this redemption depended, not on the justness of his conceptions respecting it, but on the sincerity of his heart.

Price was a decided advocate of the doctrine of Free-will, and shrunk from any theory of Predestination resembling that of Augustine or Edwards; and a strong aversion to Calvinism constituted a main characteristic generally of the liberal school of Presbyterian thought. Kippis, for example, expresses an invincible objection to the doctrine of Divine Decrees, as taught by theologians of the Genevan order; and curiously enough informs us that a once famous book—Coles on “God’s Sovereignty”—intended to support a Supralapsarian scheme of divinity, was the cause of his utterly rejecting it.* It is a still more striking example of the curiosities of theological literature, that Priestley, who outstripped all Presbyterian competitors in the race of free inquiry, should have interwoven the doctrine of philosophical necessity into the web of his speculations. Priestley attempted to distinguish between his own view on this subject and the doctrine of Calvin; but it comes so near to the latter, that theologians who adhered to the Genevan Reformer rejoiced to see the advocate of philosophical inquiry approaching their own position. Toplady was delighted when he read Priestley’s lucubrations, and rashly wrote to him in the following strain,—“Every Christian Necessitarian is so far a Calvinist. Have a care therefore Dr. Priestley, lest, having set your foot in the Lemaine Lake, you plunge in, *quantus quantus*; a catastrophe which, for my own part, and for your own sake, I sincerely wish may come to pass, and of which

* “Biog. Brit.,” IV. 3.

I do not wholly despair." * Priestley never made that plunge, and the way in which he treated Toplady's letter highly displeased the Calvinistic divine.

Steering in an opposite direction to that of his brethren, as it regards the doctrine of Necessity, Priestley proceeded in their wake as it regards Christ's Divinity and Atonement, reaching points farther removed from the old Presbyterian orthodoxy than those at which his principal contemporaries had arrived. He believed in the simple humanity of our Lord, and denied altogether the doctrine of his Atonement,† thus representing a theological school, which proceeded as far as possible in the extreme of liberal inquiry, whilst retaining a hold upon the authority of Scripture. He was no Intuitionist, but a disciple of Locke, believing that knowledge, truth, and wisdom, flow into the spirit of man from springs which lie beyond himself. As other knowledge, in Priestley's estimation, proceeds from the external world, so he regarded spiritual knowledge as proceeding from Divine instruction. He reached the *ne plus ultra* of religious rationalism in that path which suited the constitution of his mind. But another order of thought was beginning even then to make its appearance. Breaking loose from what is termed the *authority* of Scripture, and relying upon the spiritual faculties of the soul, Presbyterians sought for truth in that direction, without denying the aid to be derived from prophets and apostles, especially from the Lord Jesus. Not rejecting miracles, they gave them a place in the system of evidence, but different from that assigned by Price and Priestley ; whilst far from denying Inspiration, they

* Toplady's letter, Priestley's "Works," I. 260.

† Ibid., 257.

nevertheless weakened the distinctive force of it in Scripture, by relegating it to an operation so wide and vast as to comprise all mental and spiritual power, whether possessed by poet, sage, artist, or legislator; at the same time more scope was given to the affections. Religion had become with many Presbyterians more an intellectual exercise than anything else. Free inquiry had been idolized, and hard dogmas reached by that process had been raised to the highest point of veneration. Only one side of human nature had been provided for; the emotional had been sadly neglected. But fervour of soul was enkindled in the new school; some glow began to appear in worship, and spiritual sentiment gained a place which before had been monopolized by speculative ratiocination. Of this complex habit, which produced an immense effect on theological belief, some examples appear at the end of the eighteenth century; perhaps Mrs. Barbauld may be taken as a representative. Her writings are of a different cast from those of Price and Priestley. She pleaded for the emotional element in Christian piety. She saw the perils of mere intellectual inquisitiveness. She vindicated faith as well as reason; admitted that too critical a spirit is the bane of everything great and pathetic, and recommended that free scope should be given to the language of the affections and the outflow of devotion.*

But the chief leaders in this path must be sought in writers of later date—Channing and Tayler,† not to mention others who are still living.

* See Mrs. Barbauld's "Thoughts on Devotional Taste," etc. (Works, II. 232 *et seq.*) Also her "Remarks on Gilbert Wakefield's Inquiry into the Expediency and Propriety of Public or Social Worship." (Works, II. 413 *et seq.*)

† See J. J. Tayler's "Retrospect," etc.

The Presbyterianism which yielded theological results such as I have specified, was remarkable in many instances for its social respectability. If congregations were not very large, if they did not include many of the poor, they consisted of well-to-do people of the middle class, with several of the rich and prosperous who sought intelligence and culture. Take an example from the Eastern counties.

The Octagon Chapel at Norwich is a renowned Presbyterian place of worship, and must have been indeed a wonder when, in 1756, it was opened ; for it cost above £5000, a rare sum to have been expended for the purpose in those days, and manifesting the large resources and the rising taste of the congregation which erected it. It has a portico supported by Ionic columns, approached by a spacious front area ; the domed roof is sustained by arches on eight fluted Corinthian pillars ; and the original mahogany and oak fittings are of a description unusual in Dissenting meeting-houses. Dr. Taylor, already noticed, was pastor at the time ; and amongst his successors came Robert Alderson, afterwards Recorder of Yarmouth ; George Cadozan Morgan, a writer mentioned already in these pages ; Dr. Enfield, who had been tutor at Warrington ; and Pendlebury Houghton, a man of superior abilities and attainments. Such a ministerial succession indicates well the extent and status of the congregation. Few cities in the kingdom could present so much literary and artistic society as did the East Anglian capital, during the latter part of the eighteenth and the early part of the present century. Men and women were there rising up to take a leading position in literature and art, most of whom belonged to the Presbyterian body. John Taylor, author of several

hymns, and father of Sarah Austin ; Edward Taylor, Gresham professor of music ; Dr. Alderson and his daughter, Amelia Opie ; the Martineaus, rich in literary fame ; the Starks, connected with the Norwich school of painting ;—not to mention others, whose celebrity was confined to their native place—I believe all attended the Octagon Chapel. There was a literary Society formed in the City, of which Unitarians were leading members ; but it is curious to find amongst them a gentleman named Pitchford, a Roman Catholic ; the eminent physician, Dr. Rigby, a Churchman ; William Youngman, a sturdy Independent ; and the learned Baptist minister, Joseph Kinghorn.

In winding up what has been said respecting English Presbyterianism, it is sufficient to add, that with the ability of its ministers, the respectability of its congregations, the culture of its society, and the services which it rendered to science, literature, and liberty, it did not advance in numbers or in power. So far from it, its history for fifty years was one of decline. The causes are obvious. A dry, cold method of preaching generally marked the pulpit ; warm, vigorous, spiritual life did not appear in the pews. No greater contrast can be imagined, than between the Methodist and the Presbyterian preacher, the Methodists and the Presbyterian people. The unction, the fire, the force, so visible in the one case, is absent in the other. Methodism laid hold on the conscience of England, Presbyterianism did not. The sympathy elicited there, is found wanting here ; and no culture, no intellectual power, no respectability of position, could make up for the lack of earnest gospel preaching and warm-hearted spiritual life.

Scotch Presbyterianism in England must be distin-

guished from that just described. No imputation has ever been cast on the orthodoxy of the former. Dr. Hunter was one of its great ornaments in the City of London. But Westminster was the chief seat of the denomination. The Meeting-house in Crown Court, under the shadow of Drury Lane Theatre, was erected in 1718; and a band of brethren from the north of the Tweed might be found, before 1710, worshipping in Glasshouse Street, whence they removed to Swallow Street. The last is described as having been "a place of considerable resort for people of the Scotch nation;" and there, no doubt, in the last century, stately coaches were driven up to the door, containing the families of Scotch noblemen and thrifty merchants. A congregation of seceders comes dimly into view more than a hundred years ago, somewhere in the parish of St. Thomas the Apostle, which migrated, about 1807, to Oxenden Street Chapel, which had been built by good Margaret Baxter for the use of her illustrious husband Richard. Much more distinctly, and carrying with it more importance and effect, a Secession Church in Wells Street, especially when under the pastoral care of Dr. Waugh, comes under historical notice towards the end of the century. Educated in Scotland, imbued with the principles of moderate Calvinism, commanding in person, of a wonderfully genial and loving temper, eminently devout, excelling in what is called "the gift of prayer," the Scotch clergyman became a prominent centre of social influence soon after his arrival in London, and continued so for about thirty years.

In the north of England were congregations composed of Scotch Presbyterians. They were found in Lancashire, where "Burghers, Antiburghers, Relief

Men, and Kirkfolk harmoniously worshipped together." "The Covenanters were the only Presbyterians who absolutely refused all religious association with their countrymen. After the three communities in Scotland, the Burghers, the Antiburghers, and the Relief, became the United Presbyterians, their union in England followed of course, and the old distinctions were soon forgotten." * And in Northumberland, Presbyterianism naturally presented the Scotch form of faith and discipline. In the title deeds of chapels was inserted a provision that no one should be elected as minister, unless he subscribed a declaration of belief in the Westminster Confession.† The learned Roman antiquary, Horsley, presided over a Presbyterian Church at Morpeth ; and Dr. Young, the topographer, was an eminent minister at Whitby. For a long time the only connection traceable between the border counties or any other part of England, and the Established Church or the Secession bodies of Scotland, is to be found in the supply of English vacancies by the transference of probationers, or already ordained clergymen from the north of the Tweed. Scotland sent no missionaries to England, nor did it organize any scheme for extending its own discipline and worship beyond its national borders. All existing Scotch Churches in our country a century old, are of English foundation, and from the first, invited ministers from amongst their northern brethren.‡

* Halley's "Lancashire," II. 492.

† M'Crie's "Annals of English Presbyterianism," 318.

‡ For this information I am indebted to the late Rev. Dr. Lorimer.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE relinquishment of orthodox opinions by Presbyterian divines has been set down to the account of their ecclesiastical discipline, and the contrast between it and the strict system of Independency has been urged as evidence of superiority in preserving Evangelical truth. It is certainly a fact, that Independent Churches generally adhered to Calvinistic theology, with such modifications as would be produced by the spirit of the times and by individual idiosyncrasies. This may be largely attributed to the prominence given to old beliefs in Church Confessions and Covenants, as they were termed, and still more to the traditions as well as the spirit kept alive in these communities. But it is a remarkable fact, that in the Academies supported by Independents, there really originated very considerable divergencies, which Independents afterwards deplored. Little or no inquiry arose respecting spiritual character in the case of those intended for the ministry ; they mingled with lay pupils, and no test, religious or theological, seems to have been applied to any of them. When Doddridge died, his Academy was removed to Daventry, and placed under the care of Dr. Ashworth his friend and favourite. Little can be gathered respecting him, beyond a general impression of ability, learning, and piety. He died in 1775, in his

fifty-fifth year, after having occupied his post from 1751, the period of Doddridge's death.* The literary reputation of the Seminary stood as high as ever under Ashworth's presidency, and in this respect it appears superior to others of a similar description ; but, whatever may have been the measure of free thought allowed under the administration of his predecessor, Ashworth suffered a tendency of that kind to proceed to a very much greater length. Students were about equally divided between Trinitarianism and Arianism, the latter being the extreme of existing departures from the creed of the Puritan divines. Ashworth was succeeded by Thomas Robins, a man remarkable "for delicacy of taste and elegance of diction," to whom Robert Hall owed his first perception of these qualities when listening to a sermon preached at Northampton. No imputation of heterodoxy could be cast on the name of this excellent man ; but Thomas Belsham, already mentioned, who had been his assistant and who became his successor, after being educated a Calvinist, proceeded to adopt Socinian views. Being a gentleman of honour, when he felt his convictions were at variance with his position he relinquished office ; but his influence, before his resignation, could not but have been in favour of that unlimited inquiry which predominated in Presbyterian circles. After his removal, John Horsey, of Northampton, took charge of the students, and he is said to have made it difficult for any one to ascertain what opinions he held on controverted points ; nevertheless, he, shortly before his death, declared, "Whenever the summons shall arrive

* I have seen two Sermons by Ashworth, one on the death of Dr. Watts, the other on the death of Mr. Clarke ; both are decidedly Evangelical.

to call me from time to eternity, I wish to leave the world in the character of a penitent believer, lying at the foot of the Cross, imploring Divine mercy through the merit and mediation of Christ, the great Redeemer and Saviour of the lost." * It is difficult to ascertain, in this and other cases, what, after all, exactly was the method of teaching adopted, because statements made by different parties received a colouring from their individual tendencies.†

The academic vessel appears to have been drifting into conflicting currents, which imperilled its safety, and at length those who were responsible for its support felt it necessary to do something to guide its course ; but before that was done, another Educational Institution seemed drifting away from orthodoxy. Dr. Savage, a distinguished tutor in those days, fixed his residence at Hoxton, and there the students lodged under his roof ; but whatever might be his personal influence, it does not seem to have checked the tendencies inspired by his Presbyterian colleagues, and when questions arose as to pupils of heterodox or doubtful inclination, he leaned in favour of a charitable construction ; such a course being supported by the opinions of eminent lawyers, who were consulted on the subject in reference to certain trusts involved.‡ In 1785, the old Hoxton Academy came to an end, and another Academy was established by the Coward Trustees, which, after many years' continuance at Wymondley,

* Article in *Monthly Repository*, and Coward Trust Papers and Traditions.

† I rest most of my remarks relating to the Academy after Doddridge's time, on the authority of letters amongst the Coward Trust Papers, and traditions preserved by early friends.

‡ Coward Trust documents.

was removed to Torrington Square, London. Under a new administration the Institute acquired an orthodox reputation.* The Fund Board and the King's Head Society have been already mentioned ; a formal union between these two bodies took place in 1754. A plan was arranged by which the Fund Board, according to its original constitution, supported only those who were engaged in theological studies, while the King's Head Society took under its patronage youths occupied in the acquisition of elementary learning. Premises were secured at Mile End, by a Committee, not by the tutors, the former taking the management of affairs entirely into their own keeping. Dr. Gibbons and Dr. Conder, two orthodox Independent celebrities, had charge of this Institution, the former, in full-bottomed wig and clerical dress, as depicted in a portrait at New College, appearing the very type of an eighteenth-century professor. The Academy was afterwards removed to Homerton, according to the migratory fashion set in earlier times.

The last Academic Institution in the neighbourhood of London commenced in 1778. It originated with the Evangelical Society, as it was called, composed of persons who had caught the fire of Whitefield's ministry, and who deplored the coldness existing in Independent Churches ; it was intended to supply the spiritual needs of village congregations, the projectors intending their little bark, with a few hard rowers, to run beside larger vessels ably manned. It prospered at Hoxton, under the care of Dr. Simpson, who succeeded Dr. Addington in 1791 ; and of the former it may be remarked, that

* This Academy, or College, was, in 1851, united with the Highbury and Homerton Institutions for educating Independent Ministers, under the name of New College, St. John's Wood.

while there are many who can enlighten and persuade, there are few that can inspire, but this rare power was possessed by the principal at Hoxton, who, to his fervour of spirit and orthodoxy of opinion, added an acquaintance with the Hebrew Scriptures rather uncommon in those days.* The Institution owed much of its success to the indefatigable exertions of the treasurer, Thomas Wilson, a London merchant of singular simplicity and force of character; and in the early part of the present century it was removed to High-bury.

The same spirit which produced an Academy at Hoxton, originated one at Newport Pagnell; but in the former case Dissenters were its patrons and supporters, whereas in the latter, Churchmen united with them on its behalf. The tutor was William Bull, whom his friend, William Cowper, thus describes: "A Dissenter, but a liberal one; a man of letters and of genius; a master of a fine imagination, or rather, not master of it—an imagination which, when he finds himself in the company he loves and can confide in, runs away with him into such fields of speculation as amuse and enliven every other imagination that has the happiness to be of the party; at other times he has a tender and delicate sort of melancholy in his disposition, not less agreeable in its way."† Bull was an intimate friend of John Thornton, who at length took the entire support of the Seminary on himself, and by his will determined that it should be carried on in the same way after his death. Turning to the north of England, we find an Academy at Heckmondwike in 1756, under the care of James Scott, whose work is

* Traditions amongst his students.

† Cowper's "Life," I. 261.

described by Dr. Hamilton, of Leeds ; “ under him were educated about sixty ministers, who laboured in the northern counties with great fidelity and success ; and could an entire record of their influence be recovered from oblivion, it would be found that many a Church existing in this part of the kingdom has received an inspiration for good from the pupils of the venerable man who was placed at the spring-head of the waters.” Another educational movement in Yorkshire led to the establishment of Rotherham Academy, placed under the presidency of Dr. Williams, whose character as a theologian will be described in a later portion of this chapter ; again, we find a second provision of a similar nature at a village in the same county, named Idle, afterwards called Airedale.

Passing from Academies, subsequently called Colleges, it is appropriate to notice the literary culture of the Independent ministry. It must be confessed that, taken generally, in this respect, Independents were not equal to Presbyterians. They had no Hebrew scholar to be compared with Taylor of Warrington ; or any one versed in general literature equal to Aiken and Enfield ; not one amongst them could think of competing with Price in a genius for calculation, or with Priestley in scientific discovery. But Independency numbered several men of highly respectable attainments, and a few stand out as proficient in certain departments of theological study.

Many readers are familiar with the name, if not with the writings, of Thomas Harmer, author of a work on “ Solomon’s Song,” and of “ Observations on Scripture,” the best known of any of his publications. He took the lead in a new department of Biblical learning. There had not been wanting writers upon the gram-

matical meaning of Hebrew and Greek sentences ; and attention had been also paid to the subject of various readings, and to the critical determination of the original text. But the elucidation of difficulties arising out of the obscurity of certain allusions in the Old and New Testament ; and the illustration of narratives and parables, of prophecies, psalms, and epistles, by a knowledge of Oriental scenery, habits, and customs, had been little heeded. The enormous amount of charming literature of this description, which enables the untravelled to read the sacred volume through the eyes of attentive explorers, accomplished archeologists, and scientific investigators, had not then begun to exist. Harmer was a meritorious pioneer in this neglected field. He struck out an early path across it, and deserves to be acknowledged with honour by those who are walking in his steps. His "Observations" now have lost much of their primitive value, being superseded by later and more comprehensive publications ; but they remain a monument of the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties, and of the ingenious working out of an original idea. He lived in the village of Wattisfield, in Suffolk,—still the same rural spot it was a hundred years ago, with its church, its rectory, its blacksmith's shop ;—there, within a snug Nonconformist parsonage, not yet pulled down, he collected all the books he could procure bearing on his subject, and wrote to learned friends in every direction, seeking such assistance as they could render. His name lingers in the locality ; and he is counted amongst the celebrities of the Eastern Counties. In country lanes, running by pleasant homesteads, one can picture this retired student of the Bible, and of nature as its expository hand-book, taking his daily

walk, botanizing and musing on Scripture plants, flowers, and trees,—and trying to find resemblances to them in Suffolk hedgerows and gardens. A few of Mr. Harmer's letters have been published, and they exhibit him as an antiquary, describing coins, and rejoicing in a coronation medal of Charles I., which he had purchased for one shilling—a fact which may inspire envy in modern collectors. His merits as a student do not seem to have been appreciated by his village congregation, nor were his "Observations" at first duly estimated by some of his friends. "I thought, sir," said a lady, "you would have published a *good* book." His Biographer,* who spent much of his time at Wattisfield, says, he never heard him speak of his own production, and when at a distance first learned that his friend was an author. Little was known of him except at home until after his death,—“By strangers honoured, and by strangers mourned.” His preaching was not, as some imagined, cold, critical, and uninteresting. For fifty years he addressed a flourishing congregation in a quaint, old-fashioned meeting-house; and fathers, with their sons, daughters, and grandchildren, learned to look up to their learned pastor with respect and love for his personal virtues and the exemplary discharge of his ministrations.

He wrote a treatise on “The Ancient and Present State of the Congregational Churches of Norfolk and Suffolk,” published in 1777; and this work manifests an intimate acquaintance not only with the past and contemporaneous usages of his denomination, but also with ecclesiastical antiquities of more comprehensive range and earlier date. He was zealous in maintain-

* The late William Youngman, of Norwich, who edited Harmer's “Miscellaneous Works.”

ing the Congregational practices of a former period, and lamented modern innovations, endeavouring, with a reverence for the past worthy of his Episcopalian friends, to point out the correspondence of customs amongst Dissenters with precedents set by the primitive Churches. Earnestly did he contend for the imposition of hands in the rite of ordination, and for the value and importance of united fellowship and action between Church and Church ; at the same time, when he received to communion any one who had been a communicant in the Establishment, he informed the parish clergyman of the circumstance. For Methodists the good man appears to have had no liking, on account of their irregularities ; and much did they displease him when they received one of his flock into their fold, without taking any notice either of him or of them.

Less known perhaps, though not unnoticed in the history of Biblical Literature, is the name of Dr. Benjamin Boothroyd, a Hebrew scholar, born in 1763, of very humble origin. An Independent minister, residing successively at Pontefract and Huddersfield, he felt it necessary, owing to his limited income in the first of these places, to unite the business of printer and bookseller with the ministerial vocation. At Pontefract, under the shadow of the ruined feudal castle, crowning the heights of the pleasantly situated town, he searched its records, and threw light upon its history, in a carefully compiled volume of local interest ; and there too he published his “ *Biblia Hebraica*,” or Hebrew Scriptures without points, after the text of Kennicott. Various readings are given, selected not only from the collation of that Hebraist, but from De Rossi, and also from ancient versions.

Dr. Boothroyd was at once annotator, editor, and printer; and the work, though not perfectly accurate, has been praised by competent critics. A new Family Bible afterwards appeared under the editorship of the same person. These works were not published until after the commencement of the present century; but this industrious and struggling scholar busied himself in preparatory studies immediately after his ordination in the Church at Pontefract, in 1794.

The most distinguished theologian among the Independents at that time was Dr. Edward Williams, who, after holding a pastorate in Birmingham, became, as we have seen, president of the Rotherham Academy, in 1795. He possessed metaphysical powers of extraordinary subtlety and acuteness, and was competent to walk by the side of the renowned Jonathan Edwards, whose system he critically studied, and whose works he edited with elaborate notes, containing strictures and expansions indicative of great ability, and exceedingly useful to the thoughtful reader of the American Calvinist; perhaps Williams' analytical genius is there seen, in a scholastic form, to the greatest advantage, but his essay on "Divine Equity and Sovereignty" is the most famous of his works. Defining *Equity* to mean "a supreme disposition and right to give unto all their own," and *Sovereignty* to mean "a supreme right to will and to do whatever is not inconsistent with universal equity," he endeavoured to show how these attributes are displayed in the government of the universe; and how, by a careful observation of what distinguishes the one from the other, perplexities may be removed out of the way of theological inquirers. It was a fundamental part of his theory, that sin originates not in God, nor in chance, nor in a self-

determining power of the will, but "in a principle of defectibility in a free agent, the operation of which, nevertheless, the all-sufficient source of good is always able to prevent." He attributed all the moral excellence in the world to the influence of sovereign grace ; and all its moral evil to the fallen nature of man, as the result of inherent defectibility,—in the permission, the repression, and the punishment of which, there is a constant display of unimpeachable justice. He thought that in this theory he held a key sufficient to unlock a good many mysteries, and in his ingenious Dissertations he made very extensive use of it ; but critical readers of this critical divine will, in many instances, question the potency of his reasonings, perceiving the inadequacy of logical formularies to explain the comprehensive scheme of the Divine government. Whilst he sagaciously diminishes some difficulties, he leaves others just where they were, without seeming himself to apprehend their nature and position. What he thinks he has swept away altogether, he has only lifted from a lower to a higher shelf. There it remains, as formidable as before. The wise maxim of Butler is overlooked, that the Divine ways are a scheme but imperfectly understood, and there is no adequate recognition of the dense rim of darkness round the circle of revealed light. Yet, with these and other defects, Dr. Williams made some valuable contributions to theological science ; bringing distinctly into view the responsibility of man, in connection with the Divine righteousness, as well as the salvation of man, in connection with Divine grace. His object was to check Calvinistic extremes, and to establish the reasonableness of Evangelical religion.

To men of learning we must add those of pastoral

efficiency, whose labours, connected with the condition of their flocks, will repay attention. A distinction may, with advantage, be drawn, especially in reference to the metropolis, between old Independency and new Congregationalism. By the old Independency, I mean that government and order, and those traditions and sentiments, which had been in existence from the Commonwealth times ; and by the new Congregationalism, that modified polity and discipline, and those inspirations and sympathies, which characterized communities fundamentally independent of each other, self-governed and self-controlled, yet powerfully influenced, in their modes of operation, by the great Methodistic movement. Independency in the first generation of the eighteenth century was not so strong in London as Presbyterianism ; but, during the last thirty or forty years of that period, the relative position of the two bodies materially changed—Presbyterianism declined, Independency advanced. This was the case with regard to numbers ; probably it was also the case with regard to worldly respectability and social influence. It is true, that at the close of the hundred years, people of title, and celebrities descended from Cromwell's aristocracy, could not be found in London meeting-houses ; but the rank and file of congregations had then risen to a better social position. The quiet habits, the inexpensive mode of living, the industrial energy, and the self-reliance of a staunch Independent could not but be conducive to his worldly prosperity, in spite of prejudices incurred by his peculiar opinions. By economy and diligence, the people who chiefly filled the modest buildings set apart for worship got on in the world beyond many of their neighbours. Their well-managed shops secured customers ; their mercan-

tile ledgers exhibited pretty good balances at the end of the year ; and the result was visible in their comfortable appearance, and their superior dress on a Sunday morning in their well-filled pews. With the increase of pecuniary resources, ministerial incomes would correspond, supplemented, in some cases, by advantageous marriages on the part of ministers presiding over prosperous congregations. Divine services were carried on under George III. much after the same fashion as under Queen Anne ; for the influence of tradition, even among extreme Dissenters, bears with it immense power. Several Independent meeting-houses preserved their original form and appearance, with slight alteration, down to a date within my own remembrance ; and children or grandchildren of merchants, bankers, and prosperous tradesmen, then occupied the same parlour-like pews, lined with green baize, as did their ancestors to whom they owed their fortunes.

In some instances an old building gave place to a new one. This was the case with the King's Weigh-house, Little Eastcheap ; and perhaps I cannot select a better example of an old-fashioned congregation in the first half of the reign of George III. I am not sure but what something of a Presbyterian element at first found room at the Weigh-house ; but if so, it gradually disappeared, until it was quite lost. Samuel Palmer, the Nonconformist Historian, was assistant minister from 1763 to 1766 ; and Dr. Samuel Wilton was pastor from 1766 to 1768,—a short term of labour, but one sufficient, it would seem, to make a decided mark in the history of the congregation. His portrait presents him as a good-looking young man, with a handsome powdered wig, not so full and massive as those

worn by his predecessors, with ample bands on his neck, and wearing a coat very similar to that of a dean or an archdeacon of the present day, when in full dress. So Dr. Wilton appeared in the meeting-house built over the King's Weigh-house, to which people ascended by a flight of stairs ; and from the account given of his attainments and character—for we are told he had “a mind richly furnished both with knowledge and piety”—it may be inferred that the citizens who gathered round his ministry did not attend in vain. He was diligent as a student, acceptable as a preacher, and exemplary in the discharge of pastoral work, catechising the children, and visiting the poor. He distinguished himself as an advocate for the removal of Dissenters' grievances ; and we read, “If in anything the zeal of Dr. Wilton seemed to carry him beyond the bounds of moderation, it was in the glorious cause of civil and religious liberty.” His piety appears by no means to have been of that calm and cool description, so much admired by some of his contemporaries ; it burnt with an almost superhuman glow as the young man approached his end. To him succeeded John Clayton, whose long ministry over the Weigh-house congregation is a beautiful memory, still lingering in the minds of London Independents, who reckon him and his sons among the ornaments of their denomination. He lived to extreme old age, and I well recollect his dignified appearance, his urbanity of demeanour, his conversational power, and his pulpit ability. Under him the Weigh-house congregation increased ; and in 1795, the old building was taken down, and a new one erected. Though an Independent in Church polity, and one who might be said to represent its old-fashioned type—for he became a decided Dissenter from reading

Towgood's Letters—his education and spirit allied him in some measure to the Methodist movement, for he had been a student in the Countess of Huntingdon's College at Trevecca, and he used to preach at the Tabernacle. His Calvinism stood out in a pronounced form ; and, unlike his predecessor, Wilton, an unmistakable Whig, Clayton appeared an unmistakable Tory.

This leads me briefly to mention the new form of Congregationalism which appeared in London side by side with old-fashioned Independency. Of Calvinistic-Methodist origin, it settled down into something like the earlier Independent polity. Lay officers might not be called deacons, but they performed diaconal duties. Church meetings might not be formally held, but gatherings of that nature took place. In some places Church prayers were read ; but extempore devotion formed a main part of worship, being much more popular than a liturgical service. No submission to diocesan control, or to synodical government could be detected. The Tabernacle in Moorfields, Tottenham Court Road Chapel, and Orange Street Chapel, all noticed in former chapters, were of this description.

In the country, several Churches tinged with the same spirit are noticeable on different accounts. Bideford, in Devonshire, could boast of Samuel Lavington, pastor there from 1752 to 1807 ; a man of pulpit power, as local tradition asserts and as his published Discourses testify. His Discourses to the Young are of an uncommon character ; the introductions to some of them afford singular examples of bold and startling eloquence, somewhat of the French type, calculated to arrest attention, and inspire curiosity in reference to what might follow ; nor is the substance or the peroration unworthy of the commencement. Not that the

composition is a model of smooth and elegant style, resembling that of the Scotch preacher, Dr. Blair, whose sermons were in such repute a hundred years ago. Lavington was abrupt in his method, incisive in his appeals, and often colloquial in his forms of expression. Other volumes of Discourses addressed to adults, published after his death, are of a like order, and they sustain his fame as one of the most impressive preachers of his day. His personal virtues have been eulogized as much as his pulpit addresses. The evenness of his temper, the gentleness of his disposition, and the devoutness of his life, are canonized in the language of admiring brethren, who officiated at his funeral; and it is worth mention that his namesake, the Bishop of Exeter, the relentless enemy of Methodism, treated the Bideford pastor with kindness, would have been glad to number him amongst the Devonshire clergy, and promised him preferment if he were willing to conform.

Congregationalism, at the same period, in the town of Bedford is conspicuous on another ground. The philanthropist, John Howard, was a member of the Church originally formed by John Bunyan, consisting of both Independents and Baptists. But after a time, a secession, in which Howard was included, took place, and a Church was formed upon the Pædobaptist principle. That secession was conducted in a most conciliatory and friendly manner, and Howard offered to build a parsonage for the pastor of the old Church, an offer which was delicately declined.

The pastor's daughter often spoke of Howard's Sunday morning calls, and told how the children used to watch his knock, and walk to meeting by his side. He and the minister were wont to ride out together on horseback, when the former would decoy him to Card-

ington, and persuade him to remain to dinner. "My father," the lady related, "has often said those were some of the most delightful hours of his life, for that Mr. Howard would then completely unbend himself, and give the most entertaining accounts of his past travels; open up to him all his future plans, all his trials and sorrows, in short, every feeling of his heart in the most free and confidential manner." In a room at the corner of Mill Street, Bedford, Howard partook a slender repast, between the Sunday morning and afternoon services. He is chiefly known to the world as the great prison philanthropist, and some have insinuated that his public enterprises spoiled his home charity, and interfered with his domestic duties. This notion is utterly at variance with manifold and long remembered proofs of considerate beneficence in the neighbourhood where he lived. His pew in the meeting-house as it used to be shown I well remember; and I have been told that he often stood up with his arm round the waist of his little son—who lived to give him so much pain—holding the hymn-book before the boy's eyes, and helping him to spell out easy words of Divine praise. No less a village than a world reformer, he inspected the cottages at Cardington, and encouraged the people to work, bidding the women wash their floors, and setting them to make linen, while he employed the men in hedging, ditching, draining, and building. He founded schools for the use of all denominations; but required the children to attend some place of worship. He also made a similar stipulation with his tenants, and fitted up one of his cottages as a preaching station. His marked profile, his commanding presence, his neat wig, his cocked hat, his pigtail and other outward signs, were familiar enough

in Bedford and Cardington a century ago, as he went to and fro between his own home and the house of God. Nor can we help picturing by his side during the week, in the earliest and happiest days of his Bedfordshire life, the handsome Henrietta Leeds, his second wife, tripping over the grass to train some wayward flowers, as her husband laid out new walks ; or selling her jewels for the relief of the poor ; or saying, when a pleasure trip was suggested, "What a pretty cottage might be built with the money." The private life of the philanthropist as a Dissenting country gentleman is too tempting a theme to be lightly passed over, possessing, as I happen to do, some local traditional information on the subject, gathered long ago from the descendants of Howard's servants and friends. It is only appropriate to add, that religious principle, developed in simple and unostentatious, perhaps one might say, in somewhat puritanical forms, constituted the strength and inspiration of Howard's world-known character.

Another town remarkable in the annals of Independency is Kettering, in Northamptonshire. It rose in this respect to high renown, chiefly through the ministry of Thomas Toller, who inspired on the part of his people such an amount of admiration, that it bordered upon idolatry. And the impression he made upon particular occasions in other places corresponded with the reputation in which he was held by his own flock. Referring to a sermon by Toller, preached at Bedford, one of the greatest of orators described the effect as being what he never witnessed before or since. "All other emotions were absorbed in devotional feeling," says Robert Hall. "It seemed to us as though we were permitted for a short space to look into

eternity, and every sublunary object vanished before the powers of the world to come. It will always be considered by those who witnessed it, as affording as high a specimen as can easily be conceived of the power of a preacher over his audience, the habitual, or even the frequent recurrence of which would create an epoch in the religious history of the world." *

One more illustration remains. Village pastors worked in a way worthy of remembrance. In a few instances old wealthy families might be found in the country who preserved the traditions and spirit of their ancestors, and were glad to support the rustic meeting-house, where fathers and mothers had worshipped ever since the passing of the Toleration Act. But in more instances, village congregations consisted of a few peasants drawn together by spiritual sympathies, sometimes to the disadvantage of their temporal circumstances. We find placed over one of these at Killby, in Northamptonshire, a young man from Doddridge's Academy, named Thomas Strange. His parsonage was a tiny cottage of crumbling walls and thatched roof, the only parson's glebe being a rude adjoining orchard. There he managed to lay out a garden, and set up bee-hives. He had the oft-mentioned stipend of forty pounds, and, unable to keep a servant, he devolved the drudgery of the house on his wife and daughter. But they lived "in ancient simplicity, having every office performed by the hand of love," and by strict economy kept out of debt, never having recourse to the demoralizing practice of begging from wealthy friends. The minister eked out his income by taking a few pupils, on the moderate terms of twelve guineas a year. The good man was no great

* Hall's "Works," IV. 316.

preacher ; but he made such sermons as he could, and conducted service four times on a Sunday, walking from place to place, not less than eight miles. His influence subdued prejudice, and won reputation for his little community ; it gradually increased, and it was naively remarked, such was the influence of his life and doctrine, that when one of his congregation married a member of the Established Church, the Independent pastor most likely thereby gained another proselyte.

Descriptions in reference to Dissent in the reign of George III. convey the idea that liberty, secured by the Act of Toleration, existed without disturbance. Generally, it did, but there were exceptions. Some clergymen refused to bury unbaptized children and adults. Fees for baptism were demanded when the service had been performed by a Dissenting minister, and the same kind of imposition occurred in cases where interments took place in Nonconformist cemeteries. But we gather from the proceedings of the Dissenting Deputies that much more serious were riots and assaults committed during the celebration of worship. Even at Clapham, in 1760, a minister was insulted whilst preaching, and part of the building he occupied was demolished ; at Midhurst, in Kent, in 1772, damage was done to a meeting-house ; and at Dartmouth and at Lewes, in 1772 and 1775, peaceable assemblies were outraged by lawless mobs. In 1781 and 1782, congregations were disturbed in Staines and in Peterborough ; and in 1785, a Grimsby lawyer, who from his profession ought to have set a very different example, went into a meeting-house, cursing and swearing at a moment when the people were at worship. In 1795, 1797, and 1799, similar disgraceful

breaches of the peace occurred. Attempts were sometimes made to excuse the persecution of Methodists, on the ground that they did not assemble in licensed places ; but the instances now enumerated could admit of no such plea, since these acts of violence were perpetrated in buildings properly registered according to law. It does not appear to what denomination exactly the insulted parties were attached ; but it is probable that unusual zeal for the spiritual welfare of the population provoked the hatred of the irreligious, and that such zeal would be found mostly among those who had adopted Congregationalism under the inspiration of Methodist examples. The old Dissent had been quiet and peaceable ; the people did not think of “changing their religion :” as they were brought up, so they lived. Parish churches and meeting-houses stood face to face, and those who attended one place of worship thought not of entering another. Church and Dissent were thus, in many instances, rather distinct than opposed,—rather separate than inimical. Now a different state of things arose ; not zeal for ecclesiastical principles so much as zeal for Evangelical truth prompted Congregationalists to make aggressive movements on the ignorant and careless population around them. Torpor in the parish church made the people in the meeting-house all the more wakeful ; and efforts simply with a view of saving souls were pronounced sectarian and schismatic offences. However regarded at the time, a great religious movement arose in many parts of England, of which Yorkshire, Lancashire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Warwickshire, Kent, and East Anglia furnish typical examples.

Yorkshire Nonconformity had sunk into a low condition at the middle point of the last century.

Congregations in large towns were almost wholly heterodox and apathetic, with the exception of one assembling in the Nether Chapel, Sheffield, under the care of a decidedly Evangelical minister. He, and Scott, the patriarch of Heckmondwike, were the advanced guard of a band which sprung up soon afterwards to retrieve the fortunes of Independency. Scott's congregation greatly increased, and, in 1761, it was found necessary to erect a new and more commodious building, subsequently increased as to its measure of accommodation by the erection of "lofts" or galleries. An impetus to Evangelical Dissent sprung out of his zealous ministry; a still more powerful inspiration flowed from his labours as a theological tutor. His little Academy formed a centre, whence streams of light radiated over the neighbourhood; and results appeared in Churches which dimly or brightly shone in the surrounding gloom. Beyond such efforts the Methodistic revival told upon the Congregationalism of Yorkshire. Not to any surviving power in old Independency, never very strong in that district, but to the impulse of the day is the improved condition of the county to be ascribed. Methodism struck deep roots, both inside and outside the Establishment; and offshoots in Congregational forms soon appeared in different directions. The Methodism of Wesley planted itself in the parish of Haworth, under Grimshaw, and there grew with amazing vigour. Indeed, the parish and neighbourhood assumed the aspect of a Wesleyan circuit, subject to the rules of the Conference. The indefatigable clerical evangelist scoured the country, preaching thirty times a week, and thus he largely promoted the interests of the Connexion founded by his illustrious friend. But

some who were converted by his ministry, and encouraged by him to undertake the care and oversight of souls, forsook both the Establishment and Methodism, and became Congregational ministers.

The Methodism of Whitefield proved still more helpful. Henry Venn, in his vicarage at Huddersfield, entertained many a Calvinistic evangelist, from the great orator down to the humblest itinerant; and in his pulpit, where he was "valiant for the truth—a son of thunder," as Whitefield said, the strain of his preaching prepared many of his hearers to do, what the good man by no means desired, that is, dissent from their mother Church. Thirteen young preachers rose up out of the midst of his labours, some of whom became Congregationalists, and studied under "Father Scott," already noticed. The congregations at Huddersfield, Holmfirth, Honley, and Brighouse, trace their origin to the work accomplished by Venn; and, as the Church of England would not embrace Methodistical instrumentalities within its own borders, and control them to its own advantage, dissent followed as a natural effect, however much deplored by consistent Churchmen, some of whom saw in the operations of such men as Venn only the sowing of so many dragons' teeth. The conversion of John Thorpe at Rotherham, with its results, in the history of Dissent, is a favourite Yorkshire legend. Carousing in an alehouse, he laid a wager that he would mimic Whitefield better than any of his companions. When they had finished this exhibition, he mounted a table, exclaiming, "I shall beat you all,"—and so he did; for, opening the New Testament, where his eye fell on the words, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," he began a discourse which strangely and irresistibly rose into a strain of the

utmost religious fervour. He felt transported beyond himself, and was mysteriously carried along by the very truths which he intended to ridicule. The hearers were struck with awe, the bet was forgotten; John Thorpe became a new man, and joined the Methodists, after which his ecclesiastical opinions underwent a change, and he was chosen pastor of the first Congregational Church at Rotherham. He died in 1777, and was succeeded by Thomas Grove, one of the students expelled from Oxford. Thorpe's meeting-house, built in 1764, became too small for Grove's congregation; when another was erected at the expense of the Walker family,—great patrons of Congregationalism at that time.

Lancashire had been a stronghold of Presbyterianism; and, until after the middle of the last century, Independency made little way; then, in the form of new Congregationalism, animated by the revival under Wesley and Whitefield, it rose up with vigour, and laid its hand with a strong grasp upon the inhabitants of the great duchy. No professedly Congregational Church existed in Manchester, Liverpool, Bolton, Rochdale, Bury, Preston, Lancaster, Warrington, and Wigan, a century and a half ago. The great communities of this order, now so influential in the North, have mostly arisen within a much shorter period than that. The Evangelical fervour kindled in Yorkshire had much to do with the progress of Congregationalism in the adjoining county. The Heckmondwike Academy sent warm-hearted evangelists across the borders, and they gathered together little knots of people who formed a nucleus for some new congregation. A large proportion of the Lancashire ministers, during the last half of the century, went out of Yorkshire; Manchester, Liver-

pool, Bolton, Ashton, St. Helen's, and other places were indebted to this source for efficient pastors.

In some cases, Congregationalism did not so much draw off to its principles new converts from the Establishment, as gather together those who had previously dissented in practice. People were dissatisfied and uncomfortable, they did not find what they wanted in the parish church, though they had no objection either to Episcopacy or the Establishment, and greatly preferred the Book of Common Prayer to other forms; so they met together by themselves in irregular ways, and formed little assemblies and read the liturgy, until, having taken certain steps, they felt necessitated to proceed further. Of this state of things Congregationalists availed themselves; and drawing around them those already in sympathy with their religious spirit, they gradually brought them over to their own usages and habits. Such is the genesis of much Independency in Lancashire. And at the same time, Methodism, as in Yorkshire so in Lancashire, contributed to Congregational progress and prosperity, but it seems to have been more the Methodism of Whitefield than that of Wesley. Calvinistic Methodism, for a time, commanded a considerable following in the county of Lancaster. Chapels of the Countess's type, ministers wearing gowns and surplices, and reading the liturgy, with the superadded attraction of organs, drew large audiences, "boasting that they had the advantages of both Church and Dissent, without the evils of either." But in the long run this movement did not succeed, and it is stated on good authority, that of several chapels more or less belonging to the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, only one, that at Rochdale, preserves its original character and formu-

laries. The Calvinistic Methodists by degrees became Congregationalists. Their former peculiarities were dropped, and Independent modes of Church government assumed.

Wesleyanism, however, also in some measure helped on Independency. Many who were converted by the preaching of Wesley and his assistants, did not join their Society, because they wished for a form of Church polity different from that which consisted of conferences and circuits, class-meetings and change of ministers. Having received spiritual inspiration from the great home missionaries who traversed the length and breadth of the land, they settled down in communities, where they blended the new with the old, kindling sacrifices on ancient altars with fire which, they believed, was fresh from heaven. And it would also happen, that where converts had for a time been connected with Wesleyan organizations, they began to feel the want of calmer service and more instructive teaching.

Above all, the spread of Congregationalism in Lancashire is to be attributed to the labours of ministers held in honourable remembrance by the communities to which they belonged. Two Scotchmen, James McQuhae and Robert Simpson, are especially noticeable. The former settled at Blackburn in 1777, and gathered into his congregation Methodists, Presbyterians, and Independents. Even Arians came to hear him; and the story went abroad that, in an unapostolic sense, he was "all things to all men," and "had corn for all sorts of crops." The fact is, that he preached "Evangelical doctrine faithfully, but not angrily; practically, rather than controversially; and in a manner which interested intelligent hearers,

whether they assented or not to his statements." * He educated young men as preachers, and sent them into the surrounding villages. The other minister, Robert Simpson, came to Bolton in 1782. Bolton had been the Geneva of Lancashire; a thousand communicants had surrounded the Presbyterian table, but the numbers had sadly fallen off, when a congregation, gathered by itinerant Methodists, invited the Scotch preacher just named to take the oversight of them. Having caught the spirit of the Puritans, and something of the fire which burnt in the hearts of the Covenanters, he preached sermons full of Calvinistic theology, wrought out in anything but frost; and such effusions wonderfully animated and aroused the Lancashire people. He is the same person as I have mentioned in connection with Hoxton Academy, whither he removed when he left Blackburn. Another Independent, George Burder, who ministered in the town of Lancaster between 1777 and 1783, made his mark there during that space, not only as an efficient pastor, but as a zealous missionary. He encouraged others to make themselves useful, sending out young men to give religious instruction in the rural districts of Amounderness and Lonsdale; and probably at that early period he provided brief discourses to read to the people, such as he afterwards published in his world-known volumes of "Village Sermons."

Manchester, from the beginning of this century, proved a favourable soil for the seeds of Congregationalism, but the first sowing was by the hands of one Caleb Warhurst. To him succeeded Timothy Priestley, who, though an able man, but without the genius of his scientific brother Joseph, made himself remarkable

* Halley's "Lancashire," II. 440.

mainly by means of his numerous eccentricities. David Bradbury, the next pastor, was as odd and erratic, in another way; and after quarrelling with some of his congregation, resigned his pastorate. These are by no means favourable specimens; under such leaders the cause could not be expected to thrive. A new leaf was turned over, when, in 1795, William Roby, a Trevecca student, accepted the pastorate at Cannon Street, and commenced a career of prosperity which covered part of the present century.

Before that good man had done all his work, there went to live at Lancaster a young Scotchman, who as a carpenter worked in the same shop as did the father of Dr. Whewell, Master of Trinity. He, like his contemporary just noticed, had at first no preference for Independency; and under the instruction of a clergyman—"Mr. Simeon's first convert, or eldest son," as he was called—came to adopt evangelical views. When that clergyman removed, William Alexander, for that was the carpenter's name, enrolled himself as a member of the Independent Church in the town, over which soon afterwards there presided a minister described as "a man of decidedly Calvinistic theology, of somewhat formal but gentlemanly manners, of ready wit and repartee, rich in anecdotes, faithful and affectionate in his friendships, an exemplary Christian, and a good minister of Jesus Christ." Alexander went about holding religious conversations with his neighbours, and so acquired reputation as "a rare talker." He would also read and expound a chapter in the New Testament, which, of course, led to his being asked to preach, and he soon began that employment in one of the villages—for a time attending the parish church on Sunday morning, and

then preaching in a house on Sunday afternoons. Later on, after toiling at the bench for six days, he would walk on the seventh thirty-two miles, "often in the midst of wind and rain, and in the course of which he preached at never less than three, and frequently at four different places." When attacked as a schismatic, he would defend himself by an appeal to the Thirty-nine Articles and parts of the Homilies, which he had learned by heart. He met with a good deal of persecution, but continuing steadfast, he at length, with the sanction of neighbouring ministers, accepted the call of an Independent Church to become its pastor.* From Lancashire we proceed to Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, where we meet with a remarkable man, Cornelius Winter. He was a friend and disciple of George Whitefield, and in a series of autobiographical letters affords the best picture we have of the famous preacher's private life. Winter accompanied Whitefield on his last voyage to America, and after his death returned to England, where he sought ordination from Dr. Terrick, Bishop of London, with a view to missionary work among the negroes in Georgia,

* "Memoirs of the Rev. William Alexander," by his son, John Alexander. John Alexander was an early friend of mine, and used to talk of William Whewell as one of his schoolfellows—rather daft, the boys thought; but his subsequent career, John Alexander would say, showed how daft they were to say so. His mother was a shrewd woman, and a good type of Calvinistic Dissent, arguing strenuously for her favourite dogmas. She was also something of a politician. William Pitt was then minister, and when he put an additional tax on salt, she was very indignant at such an interference with her domestic concerns. "That Billy," said she, "is going everywhere, and now he has got into the salt box." There was a large oak salt-box hanging on the kitchen wall, and after this utterance of the good housewife, her children would slowly and timidly lift up the lid, to see what sort of a Liliputian Billy was.

under the sanction of the Propagation Society. The account which Winter gives of what took place between himself and the Bishop, presents the latter in an unfavourable light; and it is plain from the correspondence, published in Jay's "Life of Winter," that a very unfriendly feeling existed between the Society and Whitefield's friends. Winter devoted himself to mental improvement amidst immense discouragements, and he says, "My efforts were frequently discovered, and as often reproached by the enemies of literature; and our connections abounded with too many, who made little discrimination between study and sin." It is pleasant to be able to say he did not forfeit the affection of his clerical friends by his Nonconformity. Not educated amongst Dissenters, but led by the discipline of circumstances into the ecclesiastical position he ultimately occupied—though what might be attributed first to accident became afterwards a matter of preference—he appears at Painswick and Marlborough amidst the quietude of country life, with no ambition secular or ecclesiastical, destitute of any craving for popularity, content with a modest salary of £50, eked out by his wife's small income, going week by week from the study to the pulpit, and day by day, from his books and his students, to the homes of his people and the cottages of neighbouring peasants. Of a meek and gentle spirit, he generally disarmed opposition, though there were persons who, unpropitiated by candour and generosity, resented the good man's fidelity. It is as curious as it is pleasant to find one who entertained strong views of the depravity of human nature declaring, "I am never with this man without being reminded of paradisaical innocence;" another whose theology was of the same stamp used

to say, "Mr. Winter would make the worst devil of any man in the world;"* and a friend, very remote from adulation and of very discriminating judgment, more than once said, after Winter had been the subject of conversation, "I have long thought he is more like Jesus Christ than any man on earth."† This can scarcely be considered too high praise, when the purity, patience, candour, and benevolence of the man are taken into account. Rising above the sectarianism of the age, he, though a Calvinist, cultivated acquaintance with Wesley, and often spent days together with Fletcher, to whom he wrote brotherly letters, afterwards published. The erection of a Methodist chapel in Painswick gave him no offence, but on the contrary elicited catholic sympathy, and in a letter to Lady Huntingdon he remarked: "All distinctions that now divide the people of God will be lost in heaven. Though we are now distinguished by our peculiarities, we should not forget that we are but as so many tribes in the same Israel and as so many families in the same tribes." Again: "It is not always necessary to take sides, and yet it is almost impossible, often, to be indifferent. When brought into such a dilemma, a tender mind feels perhaps more than the contending parties." And yet again: "I have always considered the Church rather through the medium of Catholicism than as in party detachments; and am persuaded that if that generosity and real candour which make no inconsiderable part of our religion were mutually cultivated, our joint object would be, more to spread the gospel than to divide its professors into parties."

* The two men were Matthew Wilks and Rowland Hill
(*"Memoirs of Winter,"* 327).

† *"Memoirs,"* 327.

Warwickshire, during the last quarter of the century, was a scene of a great religious revival. It emanated from three centres. The first was the old town of Warwick, where a zealous Christian, called James Moody, in 1780 became pastor of a small Independent Church,—so small, indeed, that it did not number more than twenty members. By the end of the century about 150 communicants appeared at the Lord's table, and five or six hundred hearers gathered within the walls of the meeting-house. The second centre of influence was Coventry, whither George Burder, just noticed, went in 1783, to take charge of a Church at West Orchard, in the picturesque Midland City ; there, during a ministry of twenty years, he enjoyed popularity, and accomplished a mission beyond what can be expected to fall to the lot of many. A third centre of influence may be pointed out in the neighbourhood of Rugby, at a place called Little Harborough, about four miles from the great Midland Grammar School, where lived Sir Egerton Leigh, a pious and rather eccentric baronet, friend of Rowland Hill, and deeply imbued with the spirit of Calvinistic Methodism. From these triple points, and by these three men, were worked out lines of missionary operation which resulted in the establishment of numerous efficient Congregational Churches. Sunday schools were established in the county, after the example set by Raikes, of Gloucester ; and, in 1793, arose "The Warwickshire Association of Ministers for the spread of the Gospel at home and abroad."

Much of the same history is found repeated in the county of Kent, old Churches, Presbyterian and Independent, came under a vivifying power, and assumed a new form, and people, gathered by ministers whom

Lady Huntingdon patronized, mostly adopted Congregational forms ; a County Association of Ministers and Churches appears in 1792, the second instance of the kind, it is said,—Devonshire, in 1785, presenting the first. One remarkable labourer in Kent must not be overlooked. In the dockyard of Sheerness, hard by the fort rebuilt after being shattered in Charles II.'s reign by the daring assault of the Dutch in the Medway, there worked an industrious ship carpenter, bearing the inharmonious name of Shrubsole. Reading a book on " Looking to Jesus," by Ambrose the Puritan, he was led to adopt its evangelical sentiments, and to join himself to a little company of people who worshipped together on Sunday afternoons. Whitefield visited Sheerness, and gave fresh life to the community ; and the ship carpenter, at their request, read sermons to them every week. Preachers from the Tabernacle in London sometimes went down to address them, but the zealous artisan persevered in his services, officiating with timidity, and using parts of the Common Prayer-Book. He does not appear to have adopted Nonconformist principles, but only desired more evangelical instruction and more animated worship than he met with at church—a form of religious experience very common in those days. The upper storey of a large brick tenement, capable of accommodating three hundred people, and afterwards known as the Old Meeting House, became a place of worship, and the congregation invited Shrubsole to be their pastor. Embarrassed by his dockyard employment, he shrunk from this new office, lest he should forfeit promotion or fail in his religious duties. But encouraged on all hands, and forbidden by none, he went on in a double capacity, using his tools on week-days, and

ascending the pulpit on a Sunday. "I am accounted a phenomenon," he would say, "there never having been, I believe, a preaching mastmaker before. However, I know there has been a preaching Carpenter of the most exalted rank, and this blessed Person I am determined, by the grace of God, to imitate while I live." Government, not offended by these unusual proceedings, appointed him master mastmaker in Woolwich Dockyard. But he soon returned to Sheerness, after which a chapel of considerable dimensions was erected for his use, and there he officiated gratuitously till the time of his death. His popularity attracted the notice of those who had no sympathy with Dissent: first a clergyman, and next a member of the Government, urged him to conform, promising ordination and preferment, but he declined their flattering offers, and continued faithful to his humble charge until his death, in 1797. The artificers of the dockyard carried their master to the grave, and he left behind him a cherished memory illustrative of one peculiar phase in the religious life of that period.

Yorkshire, Lancashire, Warwickshire, and Kent, I have said, furnish typical examples of religious movement in the latter half of the eighteenth century. In other parts of England, where less conspicuous excitement appeared, there were, nevertheless, signs of renewed vitality. Nonconformist Churches in the Eastern Counties are among the oldest in our land, and they felt a renewed impulse at a period earlier than that of the revivals I have described. Dr. Doddridge met the Protestant Dissenting ministers of Norfolk and Suffolk in the month of June, 1741, at Denton, and held a conference which left an ineffaceable impression and inspired gratitude, which he says, "it would be painful

to suppress."* On that occasion he presented "the heads of a scheme for the advancement of religion," touching pastoral visits, catechetical exercises, the communion of the Lord's Supper, gatherings for prayer and conference, the education of young men for the ministry, and as to what might be done "towards assisting in the propagation of Christianity abroad, and spreading it in some of the darker parts of our own land." In reference to the last particular, it may be regarded as the earliest Nonconformist attempt at foreign missionary operations. Rules for such work were proposed by this zealous divine, and persons were encouraged, by subscribing to them, to assist the infant enterprise. Certain ministers in Suffolk seem to have caught something of this spirit; and at a later period one in the town of Ipswich, named Edwards, had his attention turned to the spiritual condition of prisoners, which led to his publishing "Sermons for the Use of Condemned Malefactors." He relates how he came to write discourses of so singular a nature. Two men were about to be executed in the town, and he received a request to visit them. He found them very ignorant, and strove to enlighten their minds; he says, what is strange beyond expression, that they were allowed to attend his meeting-house, and "came in with their fetters and shackles on." Prison discipline, everybody knows, was in a deplorable state at that time, but what is thus described exceeds anything I ever met with. The culprits sat in the public congregation, and shed tears as the preacher addressed them, till all persons were touched with sympathy. The next day, Mr. Edwards, at their earnest request, attended them to

* Dedication of Sermon on "The evil and danger of neglecting men's souls."

the gallows, and preached to the assembled multitude a sermon on the words "Flee fleshly lusts." *

One more illustration presents itself. At Stowmarket, in Suffolk, a young man named William Walford was entering the Congregational ministry, as successor to William Godwin, who for a short time had been pastor there, with no prophecy of becoming a world-known philosopher, novelist, and historian. Indeed, Godwin could then preach after the fashion of his age, and moralize on the story of Hazael, taking for his text, "Is Thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" Failing to catch the exact meaning of that often misunderstood passage, he expatiated on the changes which occur in human character, little expecting that he should avow himself an atheist in the very town where this sermon was delivered. Walford had some mental peculiarities resembling those of his predecessor, for he was independent in judgment, acute in reasoning, as perspicuous in style as he was perspicacious in thought, knowing exactly what he meant to say, and how to say it. But instead of wandering into metaphysical mazes without any Divine clue, he kept fast hold of the thread of revelation; and amidst all his inquisitiveness retained a faithful attachment to gospel truth. He met, in the country town where he lived, with hearers in whose minds doubts as to Christianity were seething in perilous ways, and vainly strove to remove them; but he received testimonies of the growing acceptableness of his services, which inspired "a hope that they would be conducive to the religious and moral improvement of his flock." One effect which intercourse with people unsettled in faith had upon the young pastor's mind is worth noticing. "It added very

* *Evangelical Magazine*, 1802, pp. 257 *et seq.*

considerably to my information, and threw some of my opinions into a better mould ; but what was chiefly valuable was the habit of listening patiently to objections urged against my own notions, and of replying to them calmly and without irritability." This habit became a powerful means of ministerial usefulness.

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CHAPTER XV.

THE history of the General Baptists somewhat corresponds with the history of the Presbyterians; the former, however, resembled the latter not in intellectual power, literary culture, or social superiority, but in a spirit of investigation, and a departure from orthodox belief. The West of England affords examples of their declension from earlier opinions, but, in some cases, they only pursued a course initiated at an earlier period; for they were never bound to particular Articles, trust deeds of their places of worship being of the most general description. An opulent and numerous congregation of this order, in the busy cloth-working town of Trowbridge, Wilts, whose meeting-house seems to have evinced some architectural pride, ran a course of the kind just indicated. Early pastors "distinguished themselves by the candour and earnestness with which they sought for truth and advocated the rights of conscience;" and no instance occurs in the history of this Church of any excommunication for erroneous sentiments. "A bad life seems to have been the only heresy of which the Trowbridge congregation have ever taken notice. A minister, who officiated amongst them in the latter half of the century, would seem to have belonged to the Arian school; and he was succeeded by one of decidedly Unitarian views, of

whom it is said, that he 'contributed to promote the knowledge of rational religion, awaken attention to free inquiry, and cherish just and liberal sentiments.' " * Also, in the first quarter of the century we meet with a Devon "manufacturer of serges," who was a zealous Baptist, of Arian, if not Socinian convictions, who preached every Sunday to a small sympathetic congregation in the parish of Dalwood, near Honiton.† Whatever might be their opinions, they retained something of a Puritan temper, and in their records express much devout feeling, of which a rather quaint and touching instance occurs in one of their documents: "Now we, the members of this little Christian Society, and those that attend among us as hearers, are in general but low in our worldly circumstances; but we that have been buried with Christ in baptism, humbly hope we have some blessed stock in faith, and a treasure in the heavens."

A great change occurred amongst the General Baptists about the middle of the century. Lady Huntingdon had a man-servant at Donnington Park, Leicestershire, named Daniel Taylor, a pious man, who began to preach in the neighbourhood with her Ladyship's sanction; and, at the same time, a blacksmith in Normanton, then recently converted, sat down one night on the kitchen table, talking to his neighbours about religion. He went on for two hours, and at the close was startled at the idea that he had been preaching. These persons, with others, called, from the place where they tried to do good, "the Barton preachers," underwent violent persecution, being brutally assaulted by village mobs. "The Barton preachers" did not adopt Baptist principles until the

* Murch's "Presbyterian Churches," 74. † Ibid., 317.

year 1755, when, having made a large number of converts in the county of Leicester, they formed themselves into a distinct society. It is stated that when they became convinced of baptism by immersion, they placed a tub in the little meeting-house, and there "the ministers dipped their infants." This was the practice for several years, when they were led to believe that "the New Testament no more authorized the baptism of infants, than it authorized baptism by sprinkling."* The preachers therefore baptised one another by immersion, and then proceeded to administer the ordinance to their converts in the same way. In 1760, the Society divided itself into five Churches, which led to the establishment of what is called the New Connexion; and it is pleasant to find that when this community was insulted in villages where hand-bells were jingled in their ears, and dirt thrown in their faces, and a bucket of blood poured on one unfortunate member, the Bishop of the diocese reprimanded a curate who had stimulated the proceedings, and recommended the preacher to his own Registrar for a certificate, according to the Act of Toleration. If the circumstance reflected credit on the Bishop, it must be added to the discredit of this subordinate officer, that he, somehow or other, evaded his Lordship's injunctions. County magistrates did all they could to crush the new party, but failed; and the latter succeeded in placing themselves under legal protection.

It appears that the New Connexion of the General Baptists sprung from an impulse created outside the circle of the elder denomination which bore the same name, but in the midst of the latter were those who retained Evangelical sentiments in an anti-Calvinistic

* Taylor's "History of the General Baptists."

form ; such Churches were found in London, Kent, Essex, and Lincolnshire,—these, in time, were absorbed into the new body, which had come to be pervaded by a similar belief and by a similar spirit.

In 1770, a meeting was held in London, “with a design to revive experimental religion, or primitive Christianity in faith and practice,” when six Articles were adopted and signed, setting forth the Fall of Man, the Obligation of the Moral Law, the Divinity and Atonement of Christ, Salvation by Faith, Regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and Adult Baptism. No allusion appears in these Articles to the Calvinistic controversy. Besides subscriptions to Articles, there was instituted another term of communion ; every minister was to give an account of his religious experience, that brethren might be satisfied concerning the reality of each other’s conversion.*

The history of the body, after these initiatory transactions, resolves itself into a history of each Church, and of the meetings of representatives held at particular times. Churches were formed in the Midland counties, also in Yorkshire, in Lincolnshire, and in London ; though neither large nor numerous, they were devoted and zealous.

Amongst the ministers, Taylor appears most prominent. He is described as a man of distinguished ability, and was successively pastor of a country Church, and of another at Whitechapel, London, whither, in 1785, he came for the remainder of his life. We find him at the annual meetings giving counsel to his brethren, writing circular letters, and otherwise promoting the knowledge of his principles ; in 1798, he

* These particulars are drawn from Taylor’s “History of the General Baptists,” I. 143.

appears presiding over an Academy at Mile End, for the education of young ministers.*

The Particular Baptist body retained their primitive organization, with, perhaps, a stronger democratic element in it than existed amongst the General Baptists, who seem in some cases to have verged towards Presbyterian habits of government and discipline. Church meetings for the admission of members, and the discussion of affairs; a demand for detailed experience from candidates seeking fellowship; worship of the most inartistic kind, often conducted by poor laymen; jealousy with regard to Independency; decided alienation from the Establishment, and a strong bond of mutual attachment, drawing together not only member with member but also Church with Church;—these were characteristics of the Particular Baptist body during the last two generations of the eighteenth century. Many pursued the practice of strict communion, while they tenaciously held the doctrine of Particular Redemption, from which they derived their distinctive name.

The Carter Lane congregation, Tooley Street,—“considered to be the most numerous of the denomination in London,” at the close of the past, and the commencement of the present century,—was distinguished for its zeal in maintaining the doctrines of High Calvinism, commonly so called. Gill, the Rabbinical scholar, who died in 1771, presided over it with much efficiency, and from the press as well as the pulpit, illustrated and defended Anti-arminian views on the “Five points,” maintaining in connection with them the tenet of “eternal justification,” and republishing,

* The General as well as the Particular Baptists adopted a Congregational polity. (Taylor, I. 192, 331.)

with defensive notes, the works of Crisp, which had excited much controversy in earlier days. Gill's voluminous commentaries—and his "Body of Divinity," whilst they excited the admiration and secured the sympathy of his flock, sustained his fame not only with the Baptist body in general, but with other denominations proud of his learning and piety as a Nonconformist. What is said of the Black Prince, that he never fought a battle he did not win—and of the Duke of Marlborough, that he never undertook a siege he did not carry, has been applied to Gill by an enthusiastic biographer, and though posterity may demur to the eulogium, many contemporaries were disposed to concur in it. After his death, Dr. Rippon, best known by his hymn books, so popular amongst Baptist congregations, became minister of the Church, and was ordained in 1773. Though not to be compared with his predecessors in point of learning and ability, he caught his pastoral mantle, and by zeal and assiduity maintained the pre-eminent prosperity of the Carter Lane Society. It is remarkable that during more than a hundred years it had not more than two pastors.

There were not wanting in the eighteenth century, amongst either General or Particular Baptists, other men of considerable learning, some of whom had been educated either at foreign universities, or at English Dissenting Academies. In general culture and bibliographical knowledge one Baptist minister stands out prominently in the middle decades of the century—the well-known Dr. Gifford, of the British Museum; not to mention for the present others who were eminent for theological acquirements. But no Academy expressly instituted for the education of Baptist ministers existed

before the reign of George II. One appears under the charge of "a man of fine talents matured by constant and severe studies," named Foskett, who died in 1759, and was succeeded by Hugh Evans, "an able and eloquent preacher," whose son, Caleb Evans, assisted him, and then, at his father's death, took his place, as Principal of the Institution, and it was under these instructors that Dr. Rippon received his ministerial training. By Evans the Bristol Education Society was formed, and the Academy being then based on a deeper and stronger foundation, another Bristol Baptist, named James Newton, qualified by classical and Hebrew studies, was associated with Evans. Both dying before the end of the century, the Institution was transferred to the hands of Dr. Ryland, and Joseph Hughes, afterwards one of the secretaries of the British and Foreign Bible Society. But the majority of the Baptist ministers during the period included within this chapter received but little education, though some of them, by dint of study, rose to eminence in theological acquisitions. They were strict Calvinists, some of them very high in doctrine, deprecating with vehemence the latitudinarian sentiments of the sister denomination, and confining the idea of Christian piety almost wholly to those who theologically sympathized with themselves.

Lapses of belief so common amongst General Baptists are found, in rare instances, amongst Particular Baptists; but one singular instance — showing that Calvinistic opinions at the outset provided no sufficient safeguard against heresy—requires attention, not only on that account, but because of the remarkable character of the man in whose life the instance occurred. Robert Robinson, a native of the county of Norfolk, was born

in 1735. When an apprentice to a London hairdresser, he heard Gill, Guyse, and Romaine, but preferred George Whitefield to any other preacher. Imbued with a Calvinistic spirit, he soon began himself to preach, and joined the Calvinistic Methodists at Norwich. Leaving them, and becoming an Independent, he settled down at length into Particular Baptist views; and, just on the edge of George III.'s reign, accepted the charge of a Baptist Church at Cambridge. It was then in a miserably low condition: strict in communion, high in doctrine, narrow in sympathy, the people had just lost a minister who is described as a "lord in his Church, a tyrant in his family, and a libertine in his life." * It may be hoped that this uncomely portrait is over-coloured; but the little flock he left, there can be no doubt, quarrelled and separated immediately after his death, so that Robinson, when he arrived, found empty walls, and a few devout souls who, amidst prevalent darkness and confusion, waited and prayed for brighter days. Thirty-four members assembled together, and all they could raise their new pastor, the first quarter, was sixty-six shillings. But the tide soon turned. Rarely has any man appeared in a pulpit with such extraordinary gifts for popular impression as Robert Robinson; with a commanding presence, a beautiful voice, a graceful delivery, a slow, measured, dignified tone of utterance, perfect self-command, wonderful skill in the use of language, a most felicitous method of quoting Scripture, directness of address, and pungency of appeal, he riveted the attention of his hearers. They gradually increased. The little one became literally a thousand. All Cambridge went to hear him: the gownsmen, at first to mock, afterwards to listen—

* Robinson's "Works," V. 283.

if not to pray. The University Professor of Music attended the meeting-house, except when official duties obliged him to be absent, and by his influence the psalmody was greatly improved, a very notable circumstance in those days. Throughout life Robinson was the uncompromising advocate of civil and religious liberty, and by that means secured friends and created enemies.

Robinson was very eccentric,—eccentric in his dress, for he would appear in the pulpit with coloured clothes; eccentric in his studies, for he would borrow books in enormous numbers, availing himself of the college and university libraries until he had emptied many shelves to fill his own, and had to send them back a cartload at a time; eccentric in his employments, for he combined trade and farming with ministerial duties, and has left behind him a diary for one day, in a letter as strange as was ever read.* But the point to be particularly noticed is the change which took place in his opinions. He began with orthodoxy, and wrote a powerful essay on the Divinity of Christ. He believed the doctrine of election in a moderate form, and ably expounded it in a characteristic treatise. He preached Evangelically, and wrote charming hymns, full of tender devotion;† and for some time associated with his brethren of the Particular Baptist denomination on

* Robinson, "Works," IV. 231. A curious instance of eccentric opinion appears in the following passage: "We never pray at a grave, lest we should mislead our little children, who know not yet their right hand from their left, in the way to heaven. We would not ensnare their unwary steps, or tempt them to form one idea favourable to that exploded Popish practice, praying for the dead." (Address at the interment of Mrs. Susanna Borley, 1782; with sermon by D. Taylor.)

† The well-known hymn, "Come, thou fount of every blessing," etc., was written by Robinson.

terms of affection and confidence. But from the beginning he manifested a spirit of bold inquiry, coupled with great self-reliance, and with contempt for other people's opinions. This, of course, provoked criticism, and at length produced alienation. Whether if he had been differently treated he would have pursued the course he did, it is impossible to say ; but it is pretty clear that his speed in the race of what he regarded as free inquiry was accelerated by the conduct of his brethren. This is certain, that at the end of life he had given up that which he held most dear at the beginning. It is difficult to determine what were his positive opinions at last. His works do not express his final views, but it is said that he passed by a rather rapid transition, not to Socinianism, but far beyond,—to the very border of infidelity. Such at least was the substance of his declaration to Dr. Priestley, whom he thanked for preserving him from that awful gulf.*

In not a few cases where a minister was the opposite of Robinson—where Calvinism was advocated with zeal—Baptist Churches were in a feeble condition for some time before the end of the century. Indeed, Calvinism rose to such a pitch as to produce a state of things resembling that of advanced Rationalistic congregations. Spiritual torpor prevailed. The religious faculties were benumbed. If some Churches folded their hands in slumber, because they had little truth they cared to promulgate, others were just as listless and idle, because preaching the Gospel to the world was no business of theirs,—God would take care of His own elect. It is to be feared that where there

* Dr. Olinthus Gregory's "Life of Hall." (Hall's "Works," VI. 28.)

might be no downright Antinomianism—a thing much more unfrequent than some people suppose—there was thoroughgoing Antinomianism in practice. A bad life was treated as no heresy whatever, provided people were not Arminians, or “free willers.” When a member fell into immorality, excuses were alleged on his behalf, arising from an idea of human inability to obey God’s commandments.* The low tone of religion in the midland counties became a subject of lamentation amongst exemplary Baptists of the neighbourhood; and they set apart seasons for prayer to the Father of spirits to recover from devious ways His backsliding children. It is very remarkable that at this very time the denomination, whether cognizant of it or not, really caught the bracing breeze which had come sweeping down from the hills of Methodism over Baptist meadows, as well as Independent fields.

There was Benjamin Beddome, in the middle of the century, at Bourton-on-the-Water, in the county of Gloucester, a man whose life and ministry resembled the streams which refresh the broad street of that pleasant little village. “Favoured with the advantage of a learned education, he continued to the last to cultivate an acquaintance with the best writers of antiquity, to which he was much indebted for the chaste, terse, and nervous diction which distinguished his compositions both in prose and verse.” “As a preacher he was universally admired for the piety and unction of his sentiments, the felicity of his arrangement, and the purity, force, and simplicity of his language, all of which were recommended by a delivery perfectly natural and graceful.” “As a religious poet his excellence has long been known and acknowledged

* Morris’s “Life of Andrew Fuller,” 27.

in Dissenting congregations, in consequence of several admirable compositions inserted in some popular compilations." * Samuel Stennet, a native of Exeter, laboured with his honoured father in that beautiful city, and then succeeded him in the pastorate of the Baptist Church within its walls. To zeal for the progress of civil and religious liberty, and attachment to his own denomination, he added a catholic spirit, and also much tender and persuasive eloquence. "He was, perhaps, the last of the Dissenting ministers who cultivated social intercourse with the great,—a practice common in the former generation, and conceived to be beneficial to the body." † The religion of Samuel Pearce, of Birmingham, had in it a seraphic ardour which passed beyond the bounds of ordinary experience. Dying at the end of the century, when only in his thirty-fourth year, he left behind him a memory which has since inspired with zeal many of his successors in the ministry. In labours more abundant, he also animated contemporaries by his example, and by his singular fervour in worship led many to exclaim, as they heard him, "We scarcely ever seemed to pray before."

John Sutcliff, another Baptist minister, is described as possessing ample stores of knowledge far beyond what most of his hearers imagined, "for he seemed almost as anxious to conceal as some are to display." "Humility diffused itself over the whole of his character and deportment, and gave it a certain beauty which no artifice could successfully imitate." "As his disposition little inclined him to ecstasy and rapture, so his piety shone with a mild and steady lustre,

* Robert Hall's "Works," IV. 438.

† Bogue and Bennett's "Hist.," II. 651.

perfectly free from the false fire of enthusiasm, and equally from a lukewarm formality." * Such unobtrusive excellence in a Christian pastor, little known beyond his own circle, deserves to be recorded, and in this instance it is brought the more distinctly under our notice by the important services rendered by the subject of it to the Church at large. For he superintended an Academy at Olney for the education of ministers, and took a prominent part in the establishment of the Baptist mission.

The two Rylands, father and son, were men of strong mental calibre, and renowned for their spiritual prowess. The father, John Collett Ryland, of Northampton, was eccentric in the extreme, as appears from a strange vow, written by him at the age of twenty : " If there is ever a God in heaven or earth, I vow and protest in His strength, or, that God permitting me, I will find Him out, and I'll know whether He loves or hates me, or I'll die and perish, soul and body, in the pursuit and search." Such a man was not likely to do or say things like other people ; and, accordingly, his preaching and conduct were often of an *outré* description,—but rich and racy sayings dropped from his lips ; his sermons were bold and original in the extreme, sublime thoughts bursting forth from amidst baser matter. The character of the son, John Ryland, Principal of the Baptist College, at Bristol, may be best delineated in words borrowed from Robert Hall. As to erudition, he was a scholar from infancy ; his attainments in the Hebrew language were profound ; he had a general acquaintance with the principles of science, and his reading was various and extensive. " He had a passion for natural history, in the pursuit of which he

* Hall's " Works," IV. 302.

was much assisted by the peculiar structure of his eyes, which were a kind of natural microscopes." "His love to the Great Supreme was equally exempt from slavish timidity and presumptuous familiarity ; it was an awful love, such as the beatific vision may be supposed to inspire when the worshippers veil their faces in that presence in which they rejoice with ecstatic joy." "The two extremes against which he was most solicitous to guard the religious public, were Pelagian pride, and Antinomian licentiousness: the first of which he detested as an insult on the grace of the gospel ; the last on the majesty and authority of the law." *

Two of the men now mentioned, John Sutcliff and John Ryland, were intimately connected with an enterprise which commenced within the last decade of the century, and this, with a kindred undertaking described in another part of this volume, constitutes a memorable epoch in the history of Christianity and the world. But the enterprise did not originate with them ; though but for them and another eminent individual to be presently mentioned, probably it would not have been carried out. The originator of the movement was William Carey, born in 1761. Up to the age of twenty-six he was a man in humble circumstances, first employed as a shoemaker, and then as a village schoolmaster. But the force of his genius rose above the difficulties of his position, and even when cutting leather and working on the last, his mind was occupied in the study of languages, the problems of geography, and the construction of maps. He acquired a knowledge of Dutch in an incredibly short time, in

* Detached Sentences, from Hall's Funeral Sermon for Ryland. ("Works," I. 393-405.)

addition to that of Latin and Greek, with which he soon made himself so acquainted as to lay the foundation for acquirements which ultimately rendered him a wonder to his age. He had a rare faculty for the acquisition of foreign tongues, and a facility—it would seem quite as rare—in all kinds of geographical investigation. Here, then, were the scientific elements out of which to form an eminent missionary; and in this case the moral power to mould and apply them was not wanting. Animated by fervent piety, and conscious of a call from Heaven, Carey left the village school, for which he had exchanged his ignoble trade, and became a minister of the Gospel, receiving ordination at Moulton, in Northamptonshire, in 1787, where he had been chosen pastor of a Baptist Church. There the duty of Christians to propagate the Gospel in heathen lands so impressed his mind that it wrought in him a passion for missionary work. He pondered the subject in silence. It produced in him fits of absence at which observers marvelled. He would pause as he walked in his little garden, and stand motionless for an hour and more, wrapt in the contemplation of this absorbing theme. He removed to Leicester in 1788, and took with him that one idea of his life, which kept burning in his breast—a coal from off no earthly altar. At a Ministerial Meeting held in the town of Clipston, he renewed the question, to him full of spiritual fascination, “Whether it were not practicable, and our bounden duty, to attempt somewhat towards spreading the Gospel in the heathen world.” For some time afterwards, in London and elsewhere, numbers doubted and objected, urging that the season had not come for such attempts. As the thought became more familiar, however, it acquired increasing strength, and began to

wear a look of likelihood. In May, 1792, Carey preached a famous sermon at Nottingham, in which he sharply brought out two simple exhortations, which have since been placed and trimmed as lamps of Heaven-kindled fire, on Baptist altars: "*Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.*" "If all the people had lifted up their voice and wept, as the children of Israel did at Bochim, I should not have wondered," are the words in which Ryland records the impression made that memorable day. He, Fuller, and Sutcliff, were now satisfied that the time had come for attempting a great work in the strength of God. So, on the second of October, 1792, they met in "the back parlour" of a good woman's house at Kettering, and resolved: "As in the divided state of Christendom, it seems that each denomination by exerting itself separately is most likely to accomplish the great ends of a mission, it is agreed that this Society be called, 'The Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel amongst the Heathen.'" Thus the Society was established, when twelve men—probably the whole number present—signed the minutes, and the subscriptions altogether amounted to £13 2s. 6d. Ryland, Carey, Sutcliff, Fuller, are among the subscribers. When once they had started on their path, they did not let the grass grow under their feet. Meeting after meeting followed, and the first subscriptions received additions,—seventy pounds being contributed by the hands of Samuel Pearce, of Birmingham, who threw himself into this missionary enterprise with intense ardour, and would have gone to Bengal, had his health permitted. Of course, everybody who joined the Society saw at once that the heaven-sent man, who had stirred them up to work, was the messenger

whom they should despatch to the heathen. He was willing to go. "We had no one to guide us," Fuller used to say, talking the matter over with friends, and comparing the work to the opening of a mine; "we had no one to guide us; and while we were thus deliberating, Carey, as it were, said, 'Well, I will go down if you will hold the rope.' But before he went down, he, as it seemed to me, took an oath from each of us, at the mouth of the pit, to this effect, 'that while he lived, we should never let go the rope.'" That, and the other legends which gather round the origin of the Baptist Missionary Society, will never die.

Another mission was attempted soon afterwards, not so well known. The cuckoo-note objection, that there is enough work to do at home without going far abroad, was then often heard; and practically to answer it by doing the one, and not leaving the other undone, was the course adopted by the Fathers and Founders of the Baptist Society. They organized efforts for the propagation of the Gospel at home. Two brethren were sent down to preach in Cornwall; and a list is preserved of the places where they preached, with notes of circumstances which occurred. Sometimes they occupied the pulpits of meeting-houses, sometimes they stood on platforms in town-halls, sometimes they addressed people in private houses, sometimes we find them "out of doors," in a back yard, in the street, amidst the romantic scenery of the Land's End and at Tintagel, rich in British legends. Also in the natural amphitheatre near Redruth, where Wesley gathered thousands together—the brethren delivered their message. Once, at Merthyr, the service was carried on in a meadow, partly by moonlight; and once, at Kellington, it being harvest-

time, the stars began to appear before the preacher commenced, and a "large lime-tree spread itself over nearly all the assembly ; these circumstances, added to the seriousness of the auditory, rendered the opportunity highly solemn and delightful."

Of "the lovely triumvirate," celebrated by Robert Hall—Fuller, Ryland, and Sutcliff, co-founders of the Baptist Missionary Society—the first requires separate attention from his eminence as a preacher and a theologian. Born in 1754 of humble parents of the Dissenting Calvinistic school, and without any early education worth the name, he devoted himself to theological study after he became the subject of deep religious convictions, and was an eminent example of what may be accomplished by a self-taught man with vigorous natural endowments. He was first pastor of a small congregation at Soham in Cambridgeshire, and afterwards removed to the pastorate of a much more important congregation at Kettering. He continued his pastoral labours until the period of his death in 1814, and at the beginning of the present century was one of the most able and influential ministers of the Baptist denomination. Without the grace of delivery and the brightness of imagination conspicuous in Robinson, and without the sublimity of thought and the felicity of diction which marked the discourses of Robert Hall, Fuller, in concentrated power of reflection, and in originality of theological speculation, surpassed them both. The momentum of his arguments and the incisiveness of his appeals have been again and again attested by those who were personally acquainted with his ministry ; and specimens of them, perhaps after all not the best, may be found in his published discourses. Sometimes familiar and homely, he would

turn to account passing circumstances : as, for example, once going to Nottingham, to preach before an association of ministers, he had to cross a swollen river, in the midst of which he became alarmed, and was about to turn back to his peril, when the voice of a friend well acquainted with the spot, cried "Forward, forward," and encouraged him to advance. On reaching his destination, he alluded in the pulpit to this familiar incident, as suggesting the privilege and security of walking by faith and not by sight, and the blessedness of His guidance who is ever present to direct our way.

Andrew Fuller once preached in a parish church.* In the spring of 1796, we are told, a reputable grazier at Braybrook, in Northamptonshire, lost his eldest son, and requested Mr. Fuller to preach a funeral sermon at his interment. When the sermon was about to commence, the meeting-house in the village was found too small to contain the congregation ; and the weather was too cold to admit of preaching in the open air. An urgent request was presented to the aged vicar for the use of the church. The interment took place in the churchyard ; and the aged and infirm vicar, having performed the burial service at the grave, introduced the Nonconformist to his pulpit, and became a hearer, while Fuller delivered a discourse from Jer. xxxi. 18-20, to a numerous and deeply affected audience. When the service was over, the clergyman shook hands with the preacher and thanked him for his serious and pathetic discourse, saying, "I hope that no ill consequences will befall either thee or me." At a visitation, however, the Bishop inquired into the circumstances, and particularly asked whether the preacher prayed for the king. The answer was, "Yes, very fervently."

* "Life," by Morris, 49.

"And what did he preach about," said the diocesan. "Why, about the common salvation," was the reply. The Bishop only added that he must not do so again.*

Fuller's fame as an author exceeded his fame as a preacher. He was not a scholar, he could not be called a learned divine, but as an original thinker he had few equals. Of his numerous works many are controversial; one on Socinianism, another on Universalism, a third on Deism; some of his writings, unfortunately, are in reply to obscure persons, or they relate to subordinate points which retain now but little interest. He fell into a controversy with a Scotch divine named Maclean, who contended that faith, as an intellectual exercise, precedes, in the order of nature, the production of moral obedience. Fuller maintained that faith itself is a moral act, that it is the root of Christian virtue, and that the turning-point of individual salvation is found in the heart rather than the intellect. But both ascribed Regeneration to the work of the Holy Spirit, and therefore, though their debate was not strictly speaking a piece of logomachy, it possessed little practical importance. Each writer believed that intellectual perceptions and moral dispositions entered into the character of personal religion; they merely differed as to which is to be placed first. No doubt underneath the question important interests are visible to metaphysical eyes, and these were detected by Fuller. With terrier-like tenacity he kept hold on what he deemed the error of his opponent, and shook it to death; but the form in which the subject was discussed by these writers has now lost its edge and interest. Much more was involved in another controversy. Against High Calvinists Fuller waged incessant

* Abridged from "Life of Fuller," by Morris.

warfare, contending not only that the gospel is worthy of all acceptance, but that men are, on moral grounds, bound to believe and obey it; that a sufficient provision has been made for their salvation, and that the invitations of peace are to be universally offered; at the same time he believed that a Divine power wrought on men, constraining them to yield up their souls to God in a life of holy love. Fuller was one of that class of theologians who are equally impressed by the facts of God's gracious sovereignty, and of man's moral obligation. In contemplating the one he could not lose sight of the other. He saw that on neither of these two principles, taken *alone*, can a system of divinity be securely based; it must cover both. He did not think that he was shut up to the alternative, on the one hand, of receiving the doctrine of Predestination, and of renouncing the doctrine of Universal Atonement; or, on the other, of rejecting the first, whilst embracing the second. In fact, he did not feel himself bound to become a thorough follower of John Calvin, or a thorough follower of James Arminius; a tendency wrought in Fuller, similar to that which had appeared in John Howe and Richard Baxter. Without the Platonic culture of the one, or the dialectic skill of the other, he had much of the theological catholicity and comprehensiveness of both; but he wrought out his results, not as the copyist of any one, but after a fashion of his own. He belonged to the same school of Evangelical divines as John Newton and Thomas Scott, but was far more inventive in method and distinct in conclusion than either of those good men. For native force he stands first in the Evangelical school of his day; and perhaps no one had so much influence as he upon Nonconformist theological

opinions during more than the first quarter of the present century.

If Andrew Fuller bears away the palm as a theologian, to Robert Hall, as a preacher, it must certainly be assigned. Educated not only at the Bristol Academy but at the University of Aberdeen, where he had Mackintosh for a fellow-student and companion, he was—unlike Andrew Fuller—an eminently learned and accomplished man. Born in 1764, he lived till 1831, and traditionary descriptions of his eloquence, and recollections of it lingering still amongst a few who, when young, had the privilege of hearing him, are sufficient to place him amongst the first pulpit orators of the last, or any other age. The rapidity of his utterance had the effect of giving additional momentum to his exhortations and appeals ; and these were sometimes so impassioned that, as if by an electric shock, he moved his hearers till they started to their feet, and bent forward in trembling expectancy of what would follow. The perfect stillness of the entire audience rendered the modulations of his voice, not naturally powerful, all the more impressive, whether his tones were pathetic or argumentative, denunciatory or persuasive. It is said, however, that like many other distinguished speakers, he was very far from being always himself, that he could sink as well as rise, and that there were occasions when listeners, though favourably disposed, would be unable to form any conception of the grandeur of his discourses at other times. In the case of George Whitefield, as we read his published sermons, we wonder at the impression he produced. His thunder and lightning could not be represented in print. But Robert Hall's eloquence was of a different description ; and as we read

his luminous pages, we are not surprised to learn that his hearers were carried away by the charm of his utterances. Of his style it may be truly said, "that it is one of the clearest and simplest; the least encumbered with its own beauty of any which ever has been written. It is light and lucid as a mirror, and its mood highly wrought; and sparkling embellishments are like ornaments of crystal, which, even in their brilliant inequalities of surface, give back to the eye little pieces of the true imagery set before them."* Language was with Robert Hall a magician's wand, with which he could accomplish surprising transformations in the minds of attentive and sympathetic hearers. Their thoughts, obedient to his touch, glowed for the moment with an imagination like his own. When the essence of his meditations or the substance of his reasonings was not original, the words in which he clothed them were such as to lend a fascination which the same thoughts did not exercise at other times. In many of his reported discourses there is little originality as to the line of reasoning pursued; but his sermon on Infidelity, to mention no other, is surprising throughout for the majesty of its ideas, as well as the felicity of his diction. The publication of it produced an unusual excitement in the most refined literary circles, and Parr and Mackintosh vied with each other in expressing their admiration. Perhaps the force of Hall's intellect was nowhere so manifest as in conversation with his friends. In Cambridge, at Alderman Ind's Club, as it was called, where the Baptist minister mingled with men of different denominations, the flashes of his wit, the dexterity of his arguments, and the incisiveness of his axiomatic remarks, were such

* Hall's "Works," VI. "Memoirs," 132.

as to leave on the memory an indelible impression of the versatility of his genius. But what concerns us most is his eminent piety of heart, humility of mind, and devotedness of purpose. He did not live to build up fame, any more than to amass wealth. The end of his existence, the one object of his will, was to preach the gospel, and to gather souls into the Church of Christ. And I have alluded to his power and his culture as means which he employed to promote the supreme design of his great endeavours.

Hall was an advocate for the practice of open communion, thus walking in the steps of John Bunyan, and other members of the same body. Some years after the close of the last century he published a book on the subject,* going into it very thoroughly, both on grounds of Scripture, and on principles of Christian reason and equity. This elicited a careful reply on the part of another eminent Baptist minister, Joseph Kinghorn, of Norwich, who permanently adhered to the practice of strict communion. The controversy lies beyond the chronological events of this history, and is only noticed to indicate that the long-continued difference on this question amongst the Baptists continued down to the close of the century; and that an advocate on the side of free communion was then rising up to defend and encourage the broader view, so effectively as to prepare for a widespread change in that particular throughout the Baptist denomination of this country.†

* "On Terms of Communion, with a Particular View to the Case of the Baptists and Pædobaptists," published in 1815. Hall's "Works," II. 1-232.

† "Baptism a Term of Communion," by Joseph Kinghorn, 1816; Hall's "Reply to the Rev. J. Kinghorn," 1818 ("Works,"

Joseph Kinghorn was rising into influence at the close of the century, through excellence of character, and depth of learning, both critical and controversial ; and he appears amongst the early prominent and devoted supporters of the Baptist Missionary Society. His ministerial course in the East Anglian capital was one of great success and high honour, and to the close of life he preserved those habits of Puritan simplicity which had marked the Nonconformists of earlier generations. "His countenance and manner, his dress and tall slender figure, were so striking as to make an indelible impression on all who had once seen him. It was indeed said of him by a young friend, using a perhaps excusable hyperbole, 'If any one had told me that Mr. Kinghorn had been one of the Apostles I should have believed him.'" He was a bachelor to the end of life, and his aged father and mother in their latter days came to live near their son. They were both of them remarkable specimens of the old dissent ; and it may serve to illuminate this history of religious life, if I introduce a couple of portraits, painted by one who knew them both,—and from personal acquaintance I can vouch for the truth of the likenesses. "She wore an ample cloak of black satin, lined with ermine ; and a white round cap, edged with lace, peeped from under a round bonnet, also of black satin. Her countenance, accent, and manner were full of kindness and gentleness, and she won my heart at once. But her partner struck me with much surprise, and with something like awe. He was very tall, and sturdily upright. His hat, with a round and very shallow crown and broad upturned verge, rested on an ample

II. 233) ; "A Defence of 'Baptism a Term of Communion,'"
1820, by J. Kinghorn.

white full-bottomed wig. His upper dress was of dark blue, the coat of great length and amplitude, with copious sleeves, large buttons, and wide flapped pockets. His nether dress was of black velvet, buckled at the knee, with dark grey stockings, terminated by square-toed substantial shoes and large square buckles. His countenance was remarkably robust and even rubicund, with keen grey eyes and shaggy brows expressive of shrewdness and great determination." * He was a Baptist minister, like his son,—but unlike him in this respect, that he was a self-taught man, reading the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures with great ease and acumen, and so far a type of a large class of Nonconformist ministers in those days.

In concluding the chapter relative to the Baptists, I would remark that weekly meetings for extempore prayer have been for many years an established usage amongst Evangelical Dissenters, but how they originated is a point at present undetermined. Occasional prayer-meetings can be traced back to Puritan times, but the earliest precisely dated instance of their weekly occurrence, that I have met with, is recorded by one who has paid much attention to the subject. "The bell of St. Mary's Church, Reading, ringing at six o'clock every week-day morning to invite workmen to prayer, suggested to some good Baptists in the town the idea of starting an early prayer-meeting on the Lord's day. They began December 20, 1772." This was followed by a prayer-meeting every Wednesday evening. Weekly prayer-meetings were not common, it would appear, till towards the close of the last century, yet one is thus mentioned of earlier date in general terms: "Considerably more than a hundred years ago," says

* Wilkin's "Memoirs of Kinghorn," 4.

a Baptist pastor,* "reference is made to a weekly meeting for prayer in a document belonging to the Church in Old King Street, Bristol. Absentees are to be fined sixpence for every occasion of absence." To the Baptists, it would seem, there belongs the further honour of establishing monthly prayer-meetings, which during the present century have been so extensively adopted with respect to Foreign Missions.†

* Rev. F. Bosworth.

† These particulars are supplied in the Circular Letter of the Baptist Association for Kent and Sussex, 1880. This interesting letter is written by the Rev. J. Aldis, of Canterbury.

It may be added here, that through the great awakening in America, "a monthly concert of prayer for the conversion of the world," commenced in 1774 amongst the Congregational Churches of New England. (Dr. Dexter's "Congregationalism of the Last Three Hundred Years," 503.)

CHAPTER XVI.

QUAKERS, in the middle of the eighteenth century described their "convictions" much after the same manner as did their predecessors in the seventeenth.

The words of Christ, "*I am the Truth*" constituted the sheet anchor of their distinctive faith. This "*I am*"—to use their own characteristic phraseology—"the essential, everlasting, saving truth, is that of which they were convinced, and in which they believed. Convinced of Him by His own immediate, self-evident operation upon their minds; convinced that this was the Spirit of Truth of whom it was said, when He came, He should convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. And being brought to this Rock and sure Foundation of living Faith, they became convinced that as the Holy God is an omnipresent Spirit, so in Spirit and in Truth must He be acceptably worshipped; that as He is in Himself infinite and incomprehensible, dwelling in the Light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see; so through this Spirit of Truth, this Holy Mediator, access only could be had, and true worship performed, to the Father of spirits. They were convinced that as He is perfectly holy, so, except they were made in degree holy, their prayers could never ascend with acceptance as the incense of saints, before

the throne of glory. And although the command and declaration to Abram is plainly exhibited in Scripture, viz., I am the Almighty God ; walk before Me, and be thou perfect ; it seemed to them an impossible attainment, till opened by Him who hath the key of David. They then saw, that perfection arose from the relation Abram stood in to an Almighty Creator ; and were convinced that this call extended to the seed of Abram through all generations. And being convinced of the purity, so they were of the peaceableness of this gospel dispensation. They not only read but felt it breathe peace on earth and good-will to men ; that there was to be no hurting nor destroying in all God's holy mountains." * This was a kind of spiritual manifesto, issued in the year 1760, "by the people called Quakers." Every denomination has its own type of excellence. Such was the standard set forth by Friends ; but it is not to be supposed, that in this, any more than in other instances of ecclesiastical history, the actual always corresponded with the ideal.

There can be no doubt, however, that in a good deal of Quaker life the principles inculcated by George Fox received a fair practical expression. Reticent as were his followers in some respects upon what is mysterious in spiritual experience, they carefully preserved brief biographical records of deceased members who had been preachers amongst them,—“testimonies,” as they were termed, “concerning ministers of the gospel, with some of their last expressions and exhortations.” The quarterly meetings in the provinces sent up to the yearly meetings in the metropolis written accounts of this nature, “to promote and encourage the practice

* Preface to “A Collection of Testimonies concerning several Ministers of the Gospel.” London, 1760.

of virtue, and of that obedience and self-denial which the gospel of Christ requires of His servants." Some of these documents were published, and examples of them, in their original form, supply interesting illustrations of that cast of sentiment and conduct which, from the beginning, marked off this peculiar people from other sections of the Christian world. One of these worthies being by trade a tailor, "soon after his conviction could not comply with the making of such needless and superfluous fashions in apparel as were then used by his customers, and thereupon gave over the chiefest part of his trade, and betook himself to other business in order to get a livelihood ; wherein Providence was favourably pleased to bless his labours with success, so that although he never had a great deal as to the things of this world, yet he had a competency sufficient to support him, and to carry him through the same with satisfaction and comfort."

A Yorkshire female member, in the twenty-second year of her age, had "a part in the ministry committed to her which became a very close concern upon her, being such a cross that she said she had rather have parted with her natural life, but could find no peace without answering the Lord's requireing ; and therefore she resolved, through His Divine assistance, to be obedient unto Him, though all sorts of people might hiss at her." The testimony respecting John Gurney—a famous Norwich Quaker, whose father had suffered much for conscience' sake—brings him before us in the middle of the century as a pillar of strength, and an ornament of beauty, to the large and prosperous community of friends in the old East Anglian city. "About the twenty-second year of his age, his mouth was opened in the assemblies of his friends as a minister,

much to their edification and comfort; and, as he advanced in years, that excellent gift was more plentifully bestowed upon him, being an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures; his ministry having often the demonstration of the Spirit and power of life attending it, being delivered with much plainness, and so suitably adapted as generally reached the meanest capacities, and answered to the witness of God in the auditors; which made him very acceptable to many, who for the most part delighted to sit under the same, and sought for opportunities so to do: Though it may be said, he endeavoured rather to be hid, than to appear to gratify the curious, or only to satisfy their itching ears, being careful in attending to the immediate pressures on his own mind before he entered thereupon; and often gave way to others, though perhaps inferior to himself in many respects, which made service more available, and better accepted." "The first day, two weeks before his last illness, he was at our meeting in the forenoon, when he appeared in a lively Testimony amongst us: He pressed us to consider, How our time passed away! and to examine How far our minds had been religiously disposed since our meeting together. Some of us, he said, seemed to be at the top of the mountain, where it pleased God sometimes to remove the clouds, and give us a clear prospect into the promised land, though we were not yet quite arrived so as to take possession thereof. It was a melting time, and an opportunity that will leave a lasting remembrance on the minds of many. He drank large draughts of affliction in this life; yet he bore them with great patience and resignation to the Divine hand which permitted them. He saw clearly they must soon finish him, as to this world; and as

they did greatly wean him from it, so they did abundantly increase his faith in the dealings and goodness of God, by which, we doubt not, they were sanctified unto him ; and though they were permitted to end his days in this world, yet, we doubt not, they did work for him, through Divine assistance, a more exceeding and joyful inheritance in the world to come.*

It is a curious fact, that in connection with their extreme spirituality and contempt for worldly things, the Society of Friends maintained two principles of a counter description : the one was what is called *birth-right membership* ; the other, that of *the minutest legislation touching the common affairs of life*. George Fox, the founder, had insisted upon the idea that the Church is made up of "living members," that is, of "a spiritual household, of which Christ is the Head ;" and Robert Barclay, the apologist, in a tone of disapproval had remarked, that when Christianity ceased to be a ground of reproach, men became Christians "by birth and education, and not by conversion and renovation of spirit." From this principle there was a departure in 1737, when a sort of Quaker poor-law was passed, and the community resolved to save its indigent members from pauperism. A spirit of comprehensive sympathy appeared, when Friends decided that wives and children should be deemed members of the monthly meeting to which their husbands and fathers belonged, not only whilst those husbands lived, but after they were dead. Then the desolate widow and her offspring were bequeathed as a legacy of love to the Society with which the supporter and guardian of her life had been identified. Very beautiful ! But they seem not to have discerned that this implied adoption of the

* "Collection of Testimonies," 7, 21, 134, 138.

rule, that membership was a natural inheritance—that it descended from parents by birthright—could not fail, in the end, to incorporate within their select community a number of persons destitute of those religious convictions which formed the very strength and life of Quaker fellowship. Friends *had* been Friends by virtue of professed “convincement,” as it was quaintly termed ; now they could be regarded as such, by virtue of the law of descent. They have been blamed for what they did on this occasion ; no doubt they departed from the original basis of their communion, but if they were blind, it may be pleaded that charity, even tender-kindness towards widows and orphans, bandaged their eyes.

The minute legislation of Quakers respecting the commonest affairs can hardly be called a departure from early principles, because from the beginning they had regarded minor peculiarities as so many outworks against invasions of worldliness, so many advanced defences round the citadel of their spiritual life. Nothing seems to have been beneath their notice. From the cradle to the grave they provided for the conduct of their members. The time children were to be kept at school, the books they were to read, how they were to be apprenticed, and rules for marriage, were specified with much minuteness. No feasting or gaiety was allowed at weddings ; bridesmaids were not to be led out of meeting by groomsmen ; and the use of a coach on one marriage occasion led to grave remark. Nor did funerals, any more than weddings, escape legislative control. As ornaments on cradles were to be dispensed with, and mothers were to suckle their children, so burials were to be conducted with the utmost simplicity ; coffins were “to be made plain, without covering of

cloth, or needless plates." Even floor-cloth in houses was forbidden ; also "the fashionable using of tea," the taking of snuff, and the smoking of tobacco. Curiously enough, they anticipated modern legislation in reference to killing salmon or trout in the breeding season ; for at a monthly meeting they said, this violates "the decree, or command of God, in the beginning, when He blessed them, and commanded them to increase and multiply."

Dress attracted great attention. George Fox had launched his thunderbolts against the costume prevalent in his day : "Away with your long slit peaks behind, in the skirts of your waistcoats," your "skimming-dish hats," your "unnecessary buttons," "your short sleeves and short black aprons," "your vizzards," and "great needless flying scarfs like colours on your backs."* This, after all, however we may smile at it, was but a revival of those sumptuary antipathies which had burst forth again and again in the discourses of mediæval monks ; and the spirit which it evinced reappears in orders issued at monthly meetings after Fox had gone to a world where such things no longer give trouble. Young women were to come to meeting in long cloaks and bonnets, and to take the advice of their elders as to what they should wear. In smaller gatherings they were to show themselves in just such apparel as that in which they meant to appear at larger ones, so that the costume might be criticised and endorsed at these rehearsals. In monthly meetings of the West Riding, the fair Rachels were to present themselves, "in those clothes that they intend to have on at York." "Let no coloured plaids be worn any more, but either mantles or low hoods."

* Crisp's "Testimony concerning Isaac Pennington," 1681, 23.

"Let none want aprons at all, and that either of green or blue or other grave colours, and not white, upon the street, or in public at all, nor any spangled or speckled silk or cloth, or any silk aprons at all." These were rules solemnly issued for the government of that most refractory of all subjects—fashion in dress. And refractory it continued amongst Quakers as among other people, notwithstanding all the trouble taken about it. In 1720, came lamentations over "quilted petticoats, set out in imitation of hoops, cloth shoes of a light colour, with heels; white and red, scarlet or purple stockings, and petticoats made short to expose them." All this concern respecting outward adornments—the plaiting of hair, and the putting on of apparel—was not confined to the young of one sex; young men were justly censured for "cutting off good heads of hair," and putting on "long extravagant gay wigs." *

* I have availed myself of Barclay's "*Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth.*" Since the publication of the first edition of this work, I have been favoured with extracts from early records of the Society of Friends in Devonshire, by Robert Dymock, F.S.A. They contain curious entries as to discipline in matters of dress, and other peculiarities; and at the conclusion it is remarked: "If these extracts reveal but little of the working of the early zeal of the Society for the spread of 'the Truth,' and appear to display in somewhat strong relief the frailties of individual members, it must be remembered, that the minutes actually recorded in the books, present but an incomplete picture of the proceedings of these 'meetings for discipline.' Written records were needed rather in matters of a business or disciplinary, than of a spiritual character, and hence the greater apparent prominence of the former." Readers are warned to be "cautious how they form conclusions with respect to the Society's doctrines or proceedings from isolated extracts from its records, for such conclusions can only be safely drawn from works specially devoted to an exposition of the Society's principles." These remarks apply to many of the illustrations recorded by Mr. Barclay and others.

Quakers sought important practical ends. They wished to promote honesty in trade,—to secure, that articles in commerce should be perfectly genuine, that goods should be made for use, and not simply for sale; in short, they fixed on the object aimed at by a sumptuary law in the middle ages. Linen and woollen articles were to be honest and substantial; and people guilty of manufacturing things slightly and of little service to the wearer, were, in case of unrefractory non-compliance with good Quaker law, to be excommunicated from all Quaker society. To prevent members from falling into debt, power was given to examine into their condition. Every one was to give to properly deputed persons an account of his circumstances and his way of living. No more business was to be undertaken than could be reasonably managed. Families were to be provided for, and reputable and solid credit maintained; the bread of idleness was not to be eaten; people were to live by the labour of their hands. Admirable advice! and, though it sometimes failed, yet on the whole perhaps, the Quakers were much more exemplary than other people in their diligence, their honesty, and their abstinence from extravagantly expensive habits.

Registration of births and marriages and deaths, the making of wills, the disposal of property, domestic disputes, the prevention of fire, and the use of fire-engines—these and other matters are comprised within the scope of Quaker rules and regulations adopted in solemn assemblies. The tendency was to form a sort of secular *imperium* in a spiritual *imperio*, and so to depart from the spirituality of ecclesiastical government; also, there might be a forgetfulness of the importance and efficacy of a few general principles in

the conduct of life, beyond a multitude of preceptive details ; yet it would appear from the history of the Society, that what they did in the way of law making, though it may, in some particulars, draw forth a smile, effected very valuable social results. The morality and good behaviour of Quakers in their mutual relations, and in their intercourse with the world, during the last century, redound immensely to their credit ; the more so when we remember the vice, the falsehood, and the manifold wickedness of the age in general.

Quakers, like other religionists, came in contact with Methodism. The Great Revival undoubtedly influenced the Society, but not to any very large extent. Wesley seems hardly to have moved them as much as Whitefield. Whitefield had more sympathy with them ; for he dwelt on the hidden life of the soul,—“a light which never was on sea or shore :” “Christ in the heart, the secret of spiritual-mindedness.” Quakers gathered round the great preacher. He preached to them, talked with them, and received from them assistance. A Quaker acted as a kind of curate to him, when on shipboard. Quakers went to hear him in Scotland and America, and “cheered him not a little ;” and a Quaker prepared a pulpit for him in Marylebone Fields.* “And,” said he, “the Quakers, though wrong in their principles, yet I think have left us an example of patient suffering, and did more by their bold, unanimous, and persevering testimonies, than if they had taken up all the arms in the kingdom.”

Once we find Lady Huntingdon crossing a Quaker's path ; and as the anecdote is interesting, I give it in the words of Mrs. Schimmelpenninck, who relates it in her memoirs. “When at Bath, as my mother grew better, she

* “Life and Travels of Whitefield,” 126, 170, 177, 275.

frequently took me with her to the Pump Room, and she sometimes told me anecdotes of those she had seen there when a child. On one occasion, when the room was thronged with company—and at that time the visitors of Bath were equally distinguished for rank and fashion—a simple, humble woman, dressed in the severest garb of the Society of Friends, walked into the midst of the assembly, and began an address to them on the vanity and follies of the world, and the insufficiency of dogmatic without spiritual religion. The company seemed taken by surprise, and their attention was arrested for a few moments: as the speaker proceeded, and spoke more and more against the customs of the world, signs of disapprobation appeared. Amongst those present was one lady with a stern yet high-toned expression of countenance; her air was distinguished, she sat erect and listened intently to the speaker. The impatience of the hearers soon became unrestrained; as the Quaker spoke of giving up the world and its pleasures, hisses, groans, beating of sticks, and cries of ‘Down, down,’ burst from every quarter. Then the lady I have described arose with dignity, and slowly passing through the crowd, where a passage was involuntarily opened to her, she went up to the speaker, and thanked her in her own name and in that of all present for the faithfulness with which she had borne testimony to the truth. The lady added, ‘I am not of your persuasion, nor has it been my belief that our sex are generally deputed to be public teachers; but God who gives the rule can make the exception, and He has indeed put it into the hearts of all His children to honour and venerate fidelity to His commission. Again I gratefully thank you.’ Side by side with the Quaker she walked to the door of the Pump Room, and then

resumed her seat. This lady was the celebrated Countess of Huntingdon."

We turn for a moment to look at the inner life of Quakerism during the latter half of the eighteenth century.

They taught their children to believe in the constant presence of God, and in that interior voice, Conscience, or the Holy Spirit, by which He speaks to human hearts, but they did not inculcate any distinct, or rather, any doctrinal views of Christian truth.* It is curious to find how they daily endeavoured to impress their own peculiar taste on the young, claiming sanction and precedent in the works of creation. "See how beautiful are the sober and unobtrusive colours of the linnet, the dove, and the redbreast. I hope thou wilt imitate them in thy attire," said a sedate friend to a thoughtful girl, who naturally replied, "But art thou not glad, though, that it pleased God not to create grandpapa's peacocks and golden pheasants on Friends' principles?" It must have been wearisome for young folks unendowed with reflective instincts to sit for an hour or two in a silent meeting-house; but a thoughtful young Quakeress † could say, "I felt the influence of that holy presence of God, visibly recognized by so many persons, whose garb marked them as withdrawn from the world, and whose countenances, for the most part, bore the impress of love and peace. I felt as one entering an overshadowing summer cloud, where the presence of light is felt, though no distinct object is

* "The religious Society to which we nominally belonged (the Friends) was at that period at the lowest ebb; and we never had the opportunity which all may now enjoy of hearing the truth in Christ commonly set forth." ("Autobiography of Mrs. Schimmelpenninck," II.)

† Mrs. Schimmelpenninck.

seen." If Friends did not bring forward dogmatic truths, neither had they the irreverent habit of bandying about the most sacred subjects in colloquial discussion. But they spoke with a religious voice more eloquent than verbal utterance in their untiring activity for the improvement of the temporal and spiritual condition of their fellow-creatures. When the emancipation of the slave, and the education of the lower classes, came to be objects of public interest, the Friends led the van of the host, in the warfare against oppression and ignorance. Spiritual conflicts and changes occurred in their experience of a singular kind ; we hear of a young lady abandoning Quakerism, submitting to baptism, entering the Church of England, and then leaving a fashionable party of her acquaintances, to prostrate herself before God in her silent chamber, whence, she at length returned, in the attire of a plain Friend, determined to abide ever afterwards in fellowship with the people among whom she was born.

Towards the close of the last century there seems to have been some relaxation in that strictness of limited intercourse which marked the early Friends. Not only did a distinguished Quaker family in Coalbrook Dale mingle with the Madeley Methodists, but another distinguished family, living in the neighbourhood of Birmingham, and entering with zest into scientific pursuits, had large and miscellaneous reunions ; amongst their guests might be seen Dr. Parr, Dr. Darwin, Sir William Herschell, Sir Joseph Banks, Dr. Priestley, and the Rev. Joseph Berrington, the literary Roman Catholic priest at Oscott.* This family was so considerate with regard to their Roman Catholic neighbours, that in case any of them should drop in during

* Mrs. Schimmelpenninck's "Autobiography."

seasons of abstinence, fish was regularly provided on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

Of extended intercourse with the outside world, another example occurs in the history of the Gurney family, at Earlham, near Norwich. In that hospitable mansion, at the latter part of the last and the beginning of the present century, the young people, with an indulgent father, cultivated friendships with those in the same rank of life as themselves, without regard to sectarian distinctions or political differences. But, after a time, some of the family returned to their former strictness—and not “a more beautiful, consistent, and exemplary Friend’s home than that at Earlham could be found in the three kingdoms.”

Such was the inner life of Quakerism. What was its outward appearance? Something different from what it had presented in the seventeenth century. No stories were now circulated respecting it, similar to those about James Nayler, in Oliver Cromwell’s time. Even good George Fox’s eccentricities, seen through the haze of antiquity, did not appear as they did a hundred years before. Robert Barclay, in his “Apology,” had given the peculiar doctrine of the Friends a place amongst well-digested systems of divinity; and William Penn, by his social position in England and his political achievements in America, had elevated his denomination to worldly respectability. Moreover, the temperate habits, the economical conduct, and the industrial activity of the members, had secured for them great wealth in the manufacturing districts, whilst their mental culture, refined tastes, and literary intercourse, had, in several cases, secured for Quaker families the highest consideration and respect.

Quakerism flourished in the city of Norwich. Some

of the members who had been poor at an early part of the century, became rich before the end, and with increasing wealth came corresponding external manifestations. A large commodious edifice was built in what is called the Gildencroft; and everything about the building, if not elegant, was made appropriate for the meeting of Friends. The floor was covered with benches in rows, broken up into three divisions by two spacious aisles. A long low gallery ran along one side of the structure, opposite the doors; and there sat public Friends, as those who preached were often called. Goodly congregations often assembled, especially on the afternoon of first day, during the summer months, when the retirement of the situation, and the airiness of the building added attractiveness to the simplicity of the service. The men sat on one side, and the women on the other, all attired in a fashion familiar to us half a century ago, but now vanishing away. Here, drab coats and broad-brimmed hats were numerous,—there, dark bonnets, pearly white shawls, and leaden coloured dresses were equally so. Among Quaker merchants of the East Anglian city were two or three persons of considerable eloquence, accustomed to lead the devotion, or to stir up the faith of the assembly; not only on the Lord's-day, but on Thursday mornings, when business being laid aside for an hour or so, the good people found spiritual rest and refreshment amidst the secular toils of life. When public Friends came from a distance, conducted from some neighbouring town by a guide on horseback, as was the custom in those days, larger numbers than usual met to hear the strangers; and, on first-day evenings, sometimes the place would be crowded to the doors. There sat the preachers in the low gallery, side by side, men and

women, each of the former leaning on his staff, each of the latter with head bowed down; all in reverential silence awaiting an impulse from the Teacher of all truth, the Inspirer of all pure thought. One of the speakers, removing his hat, would rise and address the meeting in solemn tones, or bow down in lowly worship before the Invisible One. At length, when time came for concluding the service, some one of the public Friends would rise and shake hands with a neighbour, as a signal for the people to disperse.

Marriages were celebrated in the meeting, the pair to be wedded standing up and solemnly acknowledging one another as man and wife. Hard by was a large burial ground, with no tombs or gravestones, but with a large number of grassy hillocks, beneath which slept the early fathers of the Quaker faith in the old city. When funerals took place, the dead were committed to their last resting-place in perfect silence, unless some one present would offer prayer, or administer words of consolation. A solemn air hung about the place which touched the heart—a real *campo santo*, where those who had engaged in no warfare but the spiritual, rested in peace.

Yearly meetings were Quaker festivals well known by all the citizens. So great was the access of strangers on those occasions, that the price of provisions used to rise; and quiet but busy housewives were accustomed to lay in large stores of simple cheer for the entertainment of their guests. In the streets might be seen, when the great meeting was to be held, “troops of the shining ones,” on their way to the Gildencroft; accompanied by parents and husbands and brothers, all attired in a costume which made the distinction between them and the ordinary wayfarers visible

enough. No gay ribbons were to be seen on any damsel's head ; and the sight of a jauntily-tied neckerchief on the bosom of a young Quakeress has been known to disturb the spirit and spoil the meeting of one of the rigid elders.

Anecdotes of Divine guidance and protection vouchsafed to Friends in journeys of religious service were circulated in these pleasant gatherings ; and faith in the inner light, and a sense of the all-comprehensive providence of God, were strengthened by related facts, often full of romantic dangers and deliverances. Amongst the visitors to these yearly meetings were sometimes seen American Friends, then numerous and influential. Attired in still stricter uniform than their co-religionists on this side the Atlantic, they attracted much attention, especially the female Friends, who used to wear over their drab gowns small dark-green aprons.

CHAPTER XVII.

METHODISM, both in Arminian and Calvinistic forms, served to give personal religion ascendancy over ecclesiastical government. Not that the latter was overlooked. Both representatives of the new movement—Wesley and Whitefield—set out on their career with decided convictions in favour of Episcopacy; and neither of them ever formally renounced their early views. When forced by circumstances into a position separate from the Church, Wesley saw that organization was essential to the permanence of his work; his attention was occupied by principles of Church government, and the religious body he brought into existence found itself constrained, by the necessities of its condition, to imitate his example in this respect. Still, Methodism grew out of the feeling that religious experience and the truth which produces it take precedence of everything else, and that to these primary objects all which is merely ecclesiastical must be kept in strict and lasting subordination.

Out of such an idea there arose another, namely, that in Evangelical piety we are to look for a centre and ground of union; that men may differ in Church views and yet be one in spiritual sentiment. This proceeded upon the principle that the Church is not to be identified with any visible associations, however

numerous ; that it includes many more than are ever embraced within any single fellowship, however vast ; and that a clear distinction is to be drawn between local and limited Societies on the one hand, and, on the other, the aggregate of souls renewed by truth and affiliated to the Divine Father—who leads His children home through one living Way, yet by varieties of discipline. From this manner of looking at the subject, there emanated a conviction that it is possible for persons of different denominations to co-operate in acts of charity, not only for temporal but for spiritual objects. It was believed that the disciples of Christ might combine in making their common faith known to their fellow-creatures, through the medium of the press and through the instrumentality of the pulpit. Whether these views are correct is not the present question ; the fact is simply stated, that such was the form of opinion, and such the consequences flowing from it, in the midst of the memorable Methodist Revival.

This is a different order of thinking from that which belongs to Anglo-Catholicism. Anglo-Catholicism identifies the visible with the invisible Church, orthodoxy with Orders, faith with early Creeds, spiritual life with the administration of Sacraments, and devotion, at least in public, with liturgical worship. It may not deny that salvation is possible outside its own enclosure, it may recognize the largeness of Divine mercy, and cherish what it considers a charitable hope, on behalf of those separate from its communion ; but the worship offered by such persons is maimed, their privileges are limited, and their faith is imperfect. It is thought they do not belong, in any proper sense, to the unity of the Church ; they are but outer-court

worshippers, proselytes of the gate, to be treated kindly, but not to be recognized as belonging to the chartered commonwealth of the true Israel. This conception is irreconcilable with the ideas which we discover in the folds of Methodism. Christian union, in the one case, is quite of a different type from Christian union in the other. The possibilities of co-operation are therefore in the two cases entirely different. Co-operation in ministering to physical wants and even to the mental culture of mankind, within certain limits, may rest upon the Anglo-Catholic theory, and perhaps even further still impulses of love and zeal may carry an Anglo-Catholic ; but with his theory, united action in propagating the Gospel is inconsistent. Common efforts for the circulation and advancement of Christian literature, combined endeavours for preaching the truth of the Bible and for promoting and guiding Christian worship, are out of the question.

The distinction now pointed out is necessary to be kept in view, if we would duly estimate the character of certain associations about to be described. Their originality, as compared with the current High-Church notions of the day, their boldness, almost amounting to audacity in the estimation of many clergymen, and their tendency to undermine the exclusive claims of sacerdotalism, cannot be comprehended unless by a reference to different theories of union and co-operation thus brought face to face with each other. Nor is it sufficient to refer to the Anglo-Catholic theory alone. To some other theories this idea of union stood opposed. There may be exclusiveness in Presbyterianism and in Independency as well as in Episcopalianism. Extreme ideas of the Divine right of any particular system may stand in the way of

co-operation between members of different denominations. The charge of bigotry may be sincerely repelled, Christian charity may be honestly professed ; yet union of the kind which sprang up at the end of the last century may be regarded with suspicion, and connection with it may be consistently declined. Generous sympathies had been expressed by Puritans and Nonconformists long before. Baxter and Howe, Watts and Doddridge had panted for union with intense desire. Methods of co-operation, such as were started eighty years since, would have rejoiced their hearts ; but many Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists were so attached to their own Church ideas, that they could not see their way at once to step out of enclosed vineyards, to work on a broad, open common. Nonconformists might think, and some did think, that their own ecclesiastical organizations were the best instruments with which to labour for saving souls and blessing the world. It is not wonderful that some of them should regard missionary work of all sorts as Church work, Gospel preaching as subject to the control of ministers and people in their corporate capacity, and religious teaching as necessarily involving a denominational element.

Sentiments of brotherly love, and a sympathetic desire to promote the common salvation, however, overcame in a great many ministers and laymen the objections they felt at first. Judgment, prudence, expediency, and the like, were the grounds on which their difficulties rested ; not any sacerdotal claims, not any confusion of spiritual unity with visible organization. Gradually they came to see that some of the proposed methods of united activity involved no compromise of ecclesiastical principle, required no

surrender of distinctive practices, and endangered no denominational interests.

The publication of a periodical for the exposition and enforcement of Evangelical views, and for the conveyance of information respecting the progress of religion, was one of the first objects which attracted attention. "*A New Spiritual Magazine*, or Evangelical Treasury," appeared in 1783, conducted, according to the title page, on "moderate Calvinistic principles, the only doctrines which are agreeable to the Holy Scriptures and the Reformation." It is further strangely described as presenting "the valuable labours of a *Real Society* of Gospel ministers and others." Another company projected another periodical at a rather later period. They looked, to use their own language, with unaffected concern, upon the infidelity of the age, and watched with painful apprehension what they considered the abuse of free inquiry. They deplored the progress of opinions militating against their own cherished convictions, and they sought, by means of the *Evangelical Magazine*—as their new work was entitled—not only to maintain the Divine authority of the Christian religion, and to answer objections to it current in the days of the French Revolution, but also to prove from Scripture the doctrines taught by the Puritans in general, and by most of the Reformers. Within those lines they were agreed amongst themselves, and in this respect they believed they were in possession of what is more precious than any peculiarities dividing one communion from another. Churchmen, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and Calvinistic Methodists, joined in the undertaking. The idea is said to have originated with a literary gentleman belonging to the *Globe* newspaper; but, however that

might be, the first editor was an Episcopalian clergyman, John Eyre, at that time incumbent of Ram Chapel, Homerton. Impressed by reading the works of James Hervey, he had united with the Evangelical party in the Establishment, and after having studied at Trevecca and preached in Lady Huntingdon's chapels, he entered Emanuel College, Oxford, and was ordained by Dr. Lowth, Bishop of London. First, curate to Richard Cecil, next curate to the Honourable Mr. Cadogan, his Churchmanship assumed no rigid form; he engaged in what his brethren pronounced irregular services, his friendships embraced many Non-conformists, and thus he had fitted himself for this new service, and for others of a like kind, which speedily followed. Amiable and gentle, he found a coadjutor in a man much more robust and vigorous than himself. This was Dr. Bogue, a minister educated for the Scotch Establishment, but who, from his objections to the law of patronage, then under discussion, left the land of his fathers to preach on this side the Tweed. He accepted the pastorate of a congregation at Gosport, where he manifested more decided opposition to the English Establishment than did many of his brethren; nor did he scruple to express sympathy with the French Revolution in the early stages of its history. He, in consequence, fell under the suspicion of Government, and had his name taken down as a person to be watched in political proceedings. Those who knew him best were aware that treason or sedition was foreign to his thoughts; notwithstanding hurtful rumours, he enjoyed the friendship of distinguished naval officers, and numbered amongst his hearers the wife of Lord Duncan.* He

* See "Bennett's "Life of Bogue," Morison's "Fathers and

wrote a work on the Inspiration of the Scriptures, which attracted considerable notice and was translated into French. A copy of the work, it is said, reached the hands of the great Napoleon, and was read by him with attention and interest. With the discharge of pastoral duties, Bogue united the employment of preceptor, and received as a pupil Robert Haldane, destined in his day to exert a wide religious influence. It is still more important to notice Bogue's work in educating young men for the Congregational ministry. The Gosport Academy, conducted by him, originated in 1789, and during his long term of office, he enjoyed the satisfaction of sending forth eminent ministers and missionaries. Bogue helped Eyre in conducting his magazine; and, in the September number for 1794, addressed an appeal to "Pædobaptist Christians" to imitate the example of their Baptist brethren, who had just commenced their Society at Kettering. In this address he proceeded upon denominational principles, and after referring to Roman Catholic, Church of England, Kirk of Scotland, Moravian, Methodist, and Baptist Missions, he says respecting Churches of his own order: "We alone are idle. There is not a body of Christians in the country except ourselves but have put their hand to the plough. We alone, and it must be spoken to our shame, have not sent messengers to the heathen to proclaim the riches of redeeming love. It is surely full time that we had begun." In consequence of this appeal a meeting was held the very next month, October, 1794, at the old Castle and Falcon, Aldersgate Street; and the ministers and other brethren who assembled in a room of the well-known hostelry afterwards used to talk of their

Founders" of the London Missionary Society, and the history of the Society by the Rev. William Ellis.

gathering with all that enthusiasm which lends enchantment to the origin of great undertakings, as "a hallowed circle, like a type of heaven." In arranging for their conference, a step had been taken beyond the range of Bogue's proposal, for members of *different communions* were present; and in a second Address on Missions, published in the *Evangelical Magazine* for January, 1795, the ground taken by the writer, Dr. Love, an active Scotch minister presiding over a congregation in Artillery Street, Bishopsgate, was that of a comprehensive union. "That something may be done with effect," he writes, "it is hoped that not only Evangelical Dissenters and Methodists will be found generally disposed to unite in instituting a Society for this express purpose, but that many members of the Established Church, of Evangelical sentiments and of lively zeal for the cause of Christ, will also favour us with their kind co-operation. Indeed, the increase of union and friendly intercourse among Christians of different denominations at home, is one of the happy effects which will immediately flow from an Institution of this nature."

The Address was circulated with an accompanying letter, which invited attendance at a second meeting, to be held at the same place in the same month, when a document was signed by Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Independents to the effect, that they would exert themselves to form "an extensive and regularly organized Society, to consist of Evangelical ministers and lay brethren of all denominations." The appointment of a Committee followed, consisting of two Episcopal clergymen, two ministers of the Church of Scotland, two Methodists, three Independents, and one English Presbyterian.

The Society was launched in the September of the same year, 1795, and a clergyman of the Church of England, Dr. Haweis, already noticed in connection with the Countess of Huntingdon, preached the first sermon in Spa Fields, when the Liturgy of the Episcopal Church was read and extemporary prayers were offered. A public meeting immediately followed, when Mr. Eyre explained the plan of the new Institution. Burder, Greathead—Cowper's friend—Dr. Hunter, Rowland Hill, and David Bogue, were also preachers on the occasion; the last, though not present at the Castle and Falcon meeting, thus showing his accord with the friends of the comprehensive system substituted for the denominational movement proposed by himself.

Besides these men, others already mentioned in these pages, of different communions, are to be ranked amongst the Fathers and Founders of *The Missionary Society*, as it was originally designated: Matthew Wilks, Edward Williams, William Roby, Alexander Waugh, Robert Simpson, and Edward Parsons; to them may be added, the two Townsends, John and George, the first educated at Christ's Hospital, the second at St. Paul's School—both Independent ministers. John Townsend founded the Deaf and Dumb Asylum; and there stands now in the Hall a marble bust of the good man, presented by the late Duke of Gloucester, who zealously co-operated with him in the foundation. The Congregational School, Lewisham, also originated in his philanthropic efforts. George was for many years a respected minister in Ramsgate, and his son, named after him, became well known as prebendary of Durham, and a laborious author in criticism and history. Others, less known, were George

Lambert, a Congregational minister at Hull, of whom his tutor said, "I have a student who is sufficiently dignified to be chaplain in the palace, and sufficiently simple to preach to poor travellers under a hedge;"* and John Mead Ray, for sixty-three years Congregational minister at Sudbury, a perfect type of the country gentleman, whose dignified appearance excited the admiration of George IV.,† and whose character and preaching greatly contributed to the social position of Nonconformity in the county of Suffolk. The number of Scotch ministers who took a leading part in this movement is very noticeable. Not less than nine of this class appear in a list of about thirty; and we further discover that of the rest about one-half owed their Evangelical convictions, in some way or other, to the influence of Calvinistic Methodism.‡ Not more than a third of the whole number belonged to the Independent denomination.

Laymen were actively engaged from the beginning, and the names of a few are conspicuous. Sir Egerton Leigh presided at one of the preparatory meetings. John Wilson, one of George Whitefield's converts—for thirty years manager of the Tabernacle, Moorfields, uncle to the Bishop of Calcutta, and the confidential friend of Matthew Wilks—was a much more efficient helper. His Calvinism is prominently noticed in the

* Morison's "Fathers and Founders," etc., 381.

† This occurred at Windsor, a short time before I became Minister there. He was a very old man at that time, having been born in 1753. I may mention further that he was a typical instance of a few ministers who occupied the position of country gentlemen. His son used to speak of him as having been a good shot.

‡ I trace such influence in the lives of Rowland Hill, Matthew Wilks, George Burder, Edward Parsons, William Roby, the two Townsends, and the two clergymen, Haweis and Eyre.

funeral sermon preached for him by Matthew Wilks, who remarked, in relation to his domestic life—and it was characteristic of most London merchants of the Methodist type—“He had his abode large and commodious for his family, and large enough for his Christian friends; but not for worldly company.”* William Shrubsole, son of the mast-maker at Sheerness, already described, acted as one of the first Secretaries of this Society; and it may be mentioned as indicative of the kind of men who took part in its early management, that at first he communed at Blackfriars Church, where an Evangelical clergyman officiated, and did not identify himself with Dissent till long afterwards, when he became a regular attendant and communicant at Hoxton Academy Chapel. The first Treasurer was Joseph Hardcastle, the friend of Zachary Macaulay, Thomas Clarkson, and Granville Sharp,—a well-known city merchant, a man of considerable ability, not only fitted to preside at meetings, but ready with his pen in sketching reports and appeals; and, at the same time, possessed of a calm temperament, which led him to say, when charged with finesse, “On entering the Missionary Society, I made this resolution, in the strength of the Lord, never to be offended.” He had a counting-house near London Bridge, a quaint building, called “Old Swan Stairs,” and there the early Committees were wont to be held. The Religious Tract Society, the Hibernian Society, and the British and Foreign Bible Society also found a nursery within the same walls, throwing round the spot a charm which lingered in the memory of many who talked about such things in later days. Mr. Hardcastle occupied a house at Hatcham, a

* Morison, 566.

pleasant retreat from the bustle of the metropolis ; and there were wont to gather round his table many of the Evangelicals of that day. "I am not sure," said one of the number, "that the missionary flame, which now burns so bright and strong among the Evangelical clergy, if it had not its first spark from the circle at Hatcham House, was not fanned and strengthened there." *

An expedition to the South Seas formed the first undertaking of the Society ; and for the purpose the ship *Duff*—a famous name in the Society's annals—having been purchased and fitted up, was placed under the command of Captain James Wilson, who had offered to go, without fee or reward, wherever the Directors chose to send him. He was present at the battle of Bunker's Hill, and his early history teemed with romantic adventures ; on his return, we find him brought into fellowship with the Congregational Church at Portsea, under the pastoral care of John Griffin, who first convinced him of the truth of Christianity, and then led him to feel its power. The *Duff* set sail in August, 1796, and the history of the voyage is marked by striking adventures, which, when they came to the knowledge of friends in England, must have produced an immense degree of excitement. A hurricane, blowing for four days off the Cape of Good Hope, imperilled the safety of the vessel, but when it reached Tahiti—one of the Georgian or Society Islands, discovered by Captain Cook—the natives rowed out in seventy-four canoes to welcome the visitors with frantic joy. There

* Morison, 77. I remember being told by the Rev. F. D. Maurice, that in his young days, he spent a good deal of time at Hatcham, and was there brought into connection with ministers of different denominations.

had been much talk in England about Otaheite, as the island was called by its great discoverer ; enchanting tales had been told of the simplicity of the natives, and now many were delighted beyond measure to learn how the king had presented the missionaries with a large house ; how they were assailing the idolatries and vices of the inhabitants ; how they were building forges, and working at the anvil, while the natives looked upon the bellows as a sort of supernatural contrivance, and fled with alarm when the hot iron hissed in the water ; how his majesty embraced the blacksmith ; and how, better than all, the people were listening with interest to their new instructors and were beginning to embrace the truths of Christianity. The *Duff* came back. Hopes ran high amongst the Fathers and Founders. Meetings of congratulation and thanksgiving were held in London chapels. Dr. Haweis preached, and gave “a glowing picture of God’s goodness to the Society, in the safety of the ship, the speed of the voyage, the health of the missionaries, and their cordial reception and kindly treatment by the natives. Such was the prevailing enthusiasm, that the Society resolved, on the following day, upon a second and similar voyage to the South Seas, with the view of reinforcing their staff, encouraging the missionaries in their labours, and more thoroughly exploring the country. The feeling was not confined to the Society but pervaded Britain. Periodicals were enriched with the intelligence, platforms echoed the gladdening notes, and the pulpit poured forth its best eloquence upon the result of England’s great missionary enterprise.” *

In February, 1799, the *Duff* was despatched again. Now came trouble. The ship was captured off Cape

* Aikman’s “Cyclopedia of Christian Missions,” 49.

Frio by a French privateer. The missionaries were separated from their families and transported to Monte Video, and though the rigour of their captivity was relaxed, and the wives and children were treated with consideration and delicacy, the separation was most distressing, the seizure of the vessel was a great calamity, and the event altogether grievously impeded their missionary efforts. To add to these troubles, intelligence reached this country that the natives were pilfering the missionaries and persevering in their accustomed vices, whilst, at the same time, they were entertaining unreasonable expectations of the temporal benefits to accrue from the efforts of their new benefactors. A stormy passage in the ship *Nautilus* in 1798, with certain adverse adventures of the missionaries on board, contributed to check, but not destroy the hopes of the friends at home. In the year 1800, there came the good news that the first missionary chapel had been erected in Tahiti, the chiefs having furnished materials, and the king having sanctioned the proceeding; but within two years there arrived tidings of a sad reverse—a native war broke out, and the structure was demolished, that it might not fall into the hands of the enemy. Again, it was joyfully reported that the missionaries were making a tour of the island, and preaching with acceptance and interest, though not without some opposition; next it appeared that the Christian assemblies were disturbed by heathen boys, who brought amongst their elders cocks and dogs, and made them fight at the time of worship. Such incidents, related in England, kept that part of the religious world which was interested in the enterprise in a state of constant but variable excitement; yet with steadiness of purpose, as well as with alterna-

tions of feeling, the design was carried forward, so that results have been achieved in the South Seas during the present century equal to the most glowing expectations of the original promoters of the mission.

The Friendly and the Marquesas groups were, before the year 1800, added to these scenes of hallowed toil : and at the same era, new ground was broken up in the wilds of Africa, and Dr. Vanderkemp, with three companions, commenced the conversion and civilization of the bushmen of Kaffraria. Vanderkemp was pioneer in the path so successfully pursued by the later agents of the same Society, Moffat and Livingstone ; and the civilizing career alike of the brethren in the South Seas and in Africa gave an interest to their history in the estimation of numbers, who lived quite outside the religious circles of Church or Dissent. Novelty, romance, and amusement lent charms to the story of Christian enterprise, as Englishmen were told how savages were taught to weave and build, to forge and hammer, to read and write. Useful arts were imported from Birmingham, from Sheffield, and from Bradford to the latitude and longitude of the Cape. Articles manufactured by European artisans threw the natives into rapture ; they shouted with delight at the sound of a cuckoo clock, and in their restless curiosity pulled it to pieces to discover the secret of its wonderful voice : all this, when related to our countrymen, especially the young, kindled an unprecedented enthusiasm in these missionary efforts. The men who established the London Missionary Society were remarkable for their childlike piety and strong faith. They did not participate in the inquisitive spirit of the age, and they viewed with extreme jealousy the freedom of thought advocated by many of the old Presbyterians, and by some clergy-

men in the Church of England. They had not attained to the breadth of view, the variety of culture, and the tolerant consideration of diverse theological opinions, reached by their successors ; but they exceeded most men in an Abrahamic faith in God, a firm trust in the Eternal One, a penetrating conviction that the Gospel is the only cure for sin, the supreme solace for sorrow, and the exclusive ground of hope in the prospect of death. They seem to have been scarcely, if at all, troubled by such doubts and difficulties as beset us in these days of inquisitiveness and controversy. They lived "on the sides of eternity." Not in poetry, but in truth, heaven was to them a home ; and to die was only to pass through a divinely opened door from one room to another. In words much the same as those I here use, these men were described to me by those who had known them well, or had lived much among their immediate descendants. Some allowance is to be made, of course, for the idealizing effect of distance and tradition, but no doubt the description is substantially correct. And it should not be overlooked that in the sphere of labour which they selected they went far beyond what had ever before been attempted by English missions. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel had confined itself to British dominions, and to countries which had recently been part of the empire, the Methodists were at work in the same field, the Baptists had chosen our Indian dependency as the sphere of their operations ; but this new movement was planned in a spirit of the boldest religious adventure, in harmony with the original law of Christianity, "Go into all the world" ; and the *Duff* and the *Nautilus* ploughed far-off seas to visit savage islands in the darkest depths of pagan ignorance and superstition.

The enterprise, however, did not at first win sympathy from all Evangelical Dissenters. Some felt doctrinal difficulties arising from perverted views of the subject of election. Others thought miracles were needful to secure success in preaching the gospel to the heathen ; and some unfavourably regarded the comprehensiveness of the scheme.* The former objections could be easily disposed of, but no doubt difficulties might be discerned looming ahead, if Churchmen in any large numbers continued to co-operate when wide fields of labour were at command ; and the directors had not only to provide for preaching the gospel, but also for gathering converts into fellowship. The principle laid down in the original plan, and still retained in the published constitution, was intended to give an unsectarian character to the Society. It runs as follows : "That it should be entirely left with those whom God might call into the fellowship of His Son among them, to assume for themselves such form of government, as

* In illustration of this point I cannot do better than quote a passage from the Autobiography of my friend, the Rev. William Walford. Speaking of the Rev. Thomas Towle, pastor of an Independent Church in Aldermanbury Postern, he says (p. 108):—"His religious opinions, which he held with the firmest tenacity, were highly orthodox, strictly Calvinistic and Athanasian ; so that he would admit none to his communion whom he judged to be defective in such points. He was a determined Nonconformist, and immovable in his regard to the strict discipline of regular Dissent, and in the highest degree averse to what he termed Methodistical irregularities. During the time of my intercourse with him, the London Missionary Society was formed, the constitution of which he in the highest degree disapproved, chiefly on account of the union in it between Churchmen, Dissenters, and Methodists, as he styled the followers of Lady Huntingdon and Mr. Whitefield. He held also an opinion that it would prove a failure for want of miraculous powers, which he conceived to be indispensable for the conversion of heathens."

to them shall appear most agreeable to the Word of God." But the practice would have been found less simple than the theory, had Episcopalians with other denominations continued to exercise a large amount of influence in the proceedings. Union in conducting a magazine, and union for other objects hereafter to be noticed, presented no formidable obstacles ; but union in establishing Churches would before long have proved a strain too hard to bear. The problem can scarcely be said to have been ever practically worked out ; for the Church Missionary Society—to be noticed presently—attracted to itself such Churchmen as were not satisfied with the Propagation Society, and had felt inclined to join in the institution just described. No very large number of such persons ever belonged to it, and when, in no unfriendly spirit, some withdrew to support a society established within their own Church, the management of the earlier society, as a matter of course, fell almost entirely into the hands of Non-conformists ; as Independents rallied round it by degrees in large numbers, and the relative proportion of Presbyterians diminished, the Congregational form of Church polity came to be practically followed in mission stations, although the comprehensive principle continued, in theory, to be professed.

Notwithstanding the circumstance that Scotland lies beyond the scope of this volume, it is pertinent here to add, that on the same principle as that of the London Missionary Society, another was founded in Edinburgh in the year 1796. The Glasgow Missionary Society originated the same year and stood on the same basis. They agreed not to interfere with each other's operations, or to clash with the proceedings of their neighbours in the English metropolis. Indeed,

though the effort proved unsuccessful, the Scotch attempted to co-operate with their English brethren in a mission to Sierra Leone. After this failure the North pursued its own course, but remained faithful to its original understanding with the South.

If I may be permitted for a moment to glance across the Atlantic, I would call attention to the important fact that from the stimulus afforded in London there arose missionary efforts in New England. A General Association was formed in Connecticut to "Christianize the heathen in North America, and to support and promote Christian knowledge in the new settlements of the United States." A minister, David Bacon, was forthwith despatched to the tribes on the shores of the broad Erie Lake, and a report of the progress made was sent to the Evangelical clergyman at Hackney, John Eyre, informing him of the harmony and affection which reigned among the Trustees of the Society, and that they had "one heart to promote their benevolent design." "I believe," says the famous Dr. Hopkins of Newport, in a letter to Andrew Fuller, dated October, 1799, that "all the missionary societies lately formed in America owe their rise to those formed in England and their extraordinary exertions. There are five of these societies now in New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts States." *

Rural preaching is another object which at the same period members of different churches united to promote. The Society they formed bore the name of the *Village Itinerancy*. A few wealthy persons undertook the direction of the work, and contributed towards it in a princely manner, one of them pledging himself to the amount of £500 a year. The plan in-

* Waddington's "Congregational Hist.," 1790-1800, 708-711.

cluded the employment of qualified men in supplying destitute neighbourhoods with religious instruction, and the education of young men in such elements of learning, including the Greek of the New Testament, as would fit them for preaching to rustic congregations. Hence an academy of this unpretending description was established at Hackney, to which Mr. Eyre gave his sanction and aid, having satisfaction at the appointment of a suitable president.*

In those days many more villages were destitute of spiritual instruction and care than at the present period. The parochial system, of course, was in full existence, but in numerous cases the administration of it—from the inconsistencies of clerical life, a want of zeal, and an utter neglect of spiritual or benevolent oversight—failed to produce any large beneficial effects. Nor, except by the Wesleyan Methodists and by a few other Nonconformist ministers and laymen, was much accomplished outside the Establishment for the welfare of the rural population. Wales, in this respect, afforded a remarkable contrast; for, through the labours of Howel Harris of Trevecca, who preached in the open air, assisted by ten clergymen and fifty lay preachers, three hundred churches and religious societies were formed in the southern part of the principality. Charles of Bala also threw his energies into home missionary work, and carried the religious excitement which had been kindled from south to north, penetrating by its power not only the neighbourhood in which he lived, but other contiguous districts.† Such an agency as that of the Village Itinerancy for England, therefore

* The Rev. George Collison, an Independent Minister.

† “Cyclopedia of Christian Missions,” 194. See also Rees’ “History of Nonconformity in Wales,” Chap. V.

appeared of great practical importance in the estimation of Evangelical Churchmen and orthodox Dissenters. The latter were roused to activity, much to the vexation of persons opposed to irregular proceedings, who thought that the entire instruction of the people should be left in the hands of the parochial clergy. Bishop Horsley attacked all itinerant efforts, and was regarded as an instigator of legislative enactments for their repression; in consequence of which Mr. Eyre, in the *Evangelical Magazine*,* came forward as a defender of village preaching on the plan adopted by the Hackney Institute. The right reverend Prelate had classed all unparochial agencies with Jacobin and infidel proceedings, in reply to which the Homerton incumbent affirmed that they were advancing State interests, "by turning the attention of the people from political debates, to subjects of higher importance and of everlasting interest." In all probability, Mr. Eyre and some of his co-operators were as disinclined to encourage political inquiry among the lower class as any Bishops on the bench could be. Robert Hall, as a representative, not only of Baptists but of Nonconformists generally, took up his pen against the redoubtable assailant, and vindicating the liberty of prophesying, in his own eloquent style, he tore to pieces the webs of intolerance. In answer to the allegation that efforts of the kind condemned were inimical to the Establishment, he remarked, that the promotion of piety was its professed object, and to suppress the efforts of good men for the attainment of the same result was to counteract the very purpose for which the Establishment was avowedly framed. He regarded the Establishment as too powerful to be

* For March and April, 1801.

threatened by a few village itinerants, and pointed out the true peril—"secularity, and dissipation, which may first greatly impair its influence, and finally endanger its existence." Where religion declined, it was to be imputed to the neglect of the clergy.*

The Religious Tract Society is a further example of united action. The Society in connection with the Church of England for Promoting Christian Knowledge had for a century issued books and pamphlets upon the truths of Christianity; and in 1750 a society embracing different denominations had been instituted for promoting religious knowledge among the poor. Individual efforts in the same direction may be traced in the lives of several persons. Hannah More, for the space of three years, at the commencement of the French Revolution, published *Cheap Repository Tracts*, three a month, most of them written by herself, and committees were formed to secure their circulation.† John Wesley included within the plans which he vigorously carried out the preparation and circulation of tracts. A lady at Clapham, already mentioned, enlisted in the same kind of service, and employed the press of "The Philanthropic Society" to such an extent as to provide nearly half a million of small religious publications. Simeon of Cambridge, and an active Independent minister at Kingsland, John Campbell, made themselves useful in a similar way. George Burder of Coventry originated the New Society in 1799, after having printed and circulated tracts on his own account in several counties besides Lancashire and Warwickshire, in which he successively resided.

* Fragment on Village Preaching. (Hall's "Works," III. 346-356.)

† "Life of Mrs. Moore," III. 61.

On a visit to London, the year just mentioned, when attending the London Missionary Meeting in May, he secured the co-operation of Rowland Hill and other ministers in the formation of a permanent society for publishing religious books. On the very morning after his first proposal, he held a meeting in St. Paul's Coffee House, St. Paul's Churchyard,* where of old Protestant books and Scripture versions had been cast into the flames; and a committee was appointed to draw up rules for the projected undertaking. The Religious Tract Society sprung up in 1799, under the shadow of the London Missionary Society: and as the *Evangelical Magazine* had recommended the earlier, so also it advocated the later institution.† In the first publication issued‡ the general character of its successors is foreshadowed, as not containing the shibboleth of a sect, nor as aiming to recommend one denomination more than another. When some objection was taken by Hannah More to a tract on the subject of Regeneration, Joseph Hughes wrote a letter, stating "that the sentiments of the committee were neither novel, nor confined to vulgar theologians, which might be evinced by an appeal, not only to a Watts and a Doddridge, but to a Beveridge, a Hopkins, an Ussher, and a

* Jones' "Jubilee Memorial of the Tract Society," 14.

† An appeal on its behalf is found in the July number, 1799, p. 307.

‡ This tract was composed by Dr. Bogue, and has frequently been called the Society's "Act of Parliament." "Vivian's Dialogues" and Dr. Watts on the End of Time were printed "as commencing Tracts." In the course of the first year thirty-four tracts were issued, in the second year twenty-seven, in the third only one. The twelve persons who formed the committee and officers at the Society's formation were all living in 1824 when the twenty-fifth anniversary was held. (Jones' "Jubilee Memorial," 18, 23-117.)

Hall." * At the same time it could not be concealed, indeed the founders of the Society did not wish to conceal it, that their instructions and appeals proceeded not on the line of Anglo-Catholic, but on that of Evangelical Theology.

Crossing the threshold of a new century, we meet in 1802 with a movement which issued in the establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The circulation of the Scriptures had been promoted by the Christian Knowledge and Propagation Societies. In the seventeenth century Lord Wharton's Trust, and in the eighteenth century the Coward Trust, had given copies of the English Bible to poor people ; and in 1779, there rose an effort which has not secured the notice it deserves. An unknown Quaker, named John Davis, wrote to another Quaker, George Cussons, proposing to distribute small pocket Bibles among the privates of the regular and militia troops. The well-known John Thornton encouraged the idea, and in the same year it took shape as a "Bible Society," since known as the "Naval and Military Bible Society." At the time of the Gordon Riots, in 1780, the soldiers encamped in Hyde Park were furnished with Bibles, and soon afterwards the Society was found steadily at work. John Newton, Rowland Hill, Bishop Horne, and William Wilberforce, promoted its objects, and, in later days, the Duke of Wellington appeared as president. This organization provided for a particular class ; the world at large needed the same kind of effort on a corresponding scale. The story of Charles of Bala and the little Welsh girl, who "could not get to read the Bible" ; and of his interview with Joseph Hughes, when he proposed a Bible Society for Wales,

* Quoted in Jones' "Jubilee Memorial," 37.

and was met with the suggestion : "Why not for the empire and the world?" is now a legend current throughout Christendom, and has given a key-note to countless speeches on Bible platforms. It was at a committee meeting of the Tract Society that the interview between Charles and Hughes occurred; and in its early minute book are recorded the steps which led to the inauguration of its noble associate in the enterprise of philanthropy. Several of the most prominent names noticed in the last few pages of this history appear in the preparatory proceedings, together with those of Wilberforce and Dr. Steinkopff—one of the first secretaries. Owen, an honoured Evangelical clergyman of that day, rejoiced to find himself "surrounded by a multitude of Christians, whose doctrinal and ritual differences had for ages kept them asunder, and who had been taught to regard each other with a sort of pious estrangement, or rather of consecrated hostility." And describing the early circumstances of the Society, he says, "The scene was new; nothing analogous to it had perhaps been exhibited before the public since Christians had begun to organize amongst each other the strife of separation, and to carry into their own camp that war which they ought to have waged in concert against the common enemy."*

* Owen's "History of the Bible Society," I. 44.

The connection between the Tract Society and the Bible Society is often overlooked. It is interesting to read the following entries in the minute book of the former Society :—

"Tuesday, December 21, 1802.—The Secretary read a paper on the importance of forming a Society for the distribution of Bibles in various languages.

"Resolved—that a special meeting be holden next Tuesday, at 8 o'clock, as preparatory to a general meeting to promote that end."

The committee met, and this minute is recorded :—

"The object of the intended Society was maturely considered

This narrative of the religious organizations which sprung up at the close of the last century or the beginning of the present would not be complete without some notice of the origin of the Church Missionary Society. The founders were all Evangelical clergymen, and amongst them Wilberforce took a prominent part. He was anxious to promote missionary operations, beyond the sphere occupied by the Propagation Society, and on different religious principles from those which it maintained. He deplored the neglect of the East India Company in reference to the natives under their control, and moved a resolution in the House of Commons that it was a bounden duty, by all just and prudent means, to promote the religious improvement of the native Indians ; but the Company, alarmed at his proposal, succeeded in striking this clause out of the India Bill of 1793.* This left no course open but to establish a voluntary society for spreading Christianity in the East, and such a society found an eloquent advocate in the illustrious philanthropist just

and determined unanimously to be : to promote the circulation of the Holy Scriptures in foreign countries, and in those parts of the British dominions for which adequate provision is not yet made : it being understood that no English translation of the Scriptures will be gratuitously circulated by the Society in Great Britain."

"January, 1804.—A special meeting was held for the purpose of promoting the Bible Society, when it was resolved that the title of the Society should be 'The British and Foreign Bible Society,' agreeably to the suggestion of the Secretary, and that he be requested to prepare a circular letter on the subject."

It is afterwards stated that there was "reason to conclude that several respectable members of the Society called Quakers would attend the public meeting, and exert themselves on behalf of the excellent object."

These entries, with several others, are printed in Jones' "Jubilee Memorial," 48-51.

* "Life of Wilberforce," by his Sons, II. 25, and Appendix.

named. Other circumstances at the time favoured the project. A sum of £4000 had been left by a gentleman of the name of Jane, to be expended "for the best advantage of the interests of religion." A few Evangelical clergymen in the country met and decided that the bequest could not be better applied than to the sending out of missionaries. The Eclectic Society of London, comprehending ministers of the Evangelical type with a sprinkling of Dissenters, discussed the question but with a different result. Only two or three agreed with Mr. Simeon in his view, which accorded with that of the country brethren. But a renewed discussion in 1799 led to a more favourable opinion, and by an interesting coincidence the Castle and Falcon in Aldersgate Street, which had been the cradle of the London Missionary Society, witnessed the birth of its younger sister. Sixteen clergymen and nine laymen pledged themselves to support the new enterprise.* Without manifesting any antagonism to the Societies for Promoting Christian Knowledge and for the Propagation of the Gospel, it fixed itself upon a different foundation; and without recognizing any control on the part of the Episcopal rulers of the Church, it simply made an annual contribution the ground of membership, and vested the power of administration in the hands of seven governors and a treasurer, chosen by the members, together with a committee of twenty-five elected in the same way. It was subject at first to no Episcopal authority. It was "rather a Society *within* the Church of England than a Society *of* the Church of England."† Its earliest agents were not episcopally ordained, they were

* "Life of Simeon," by Carus, 107, 167.

† Perry's "History of the Church of England," III. 489.

Lutherans or members of some other reformed Church on the Continent. Its practice of late years has been quite different. Its missionaries are now all of the Episcopalian order. Designed originally for the East and for Africa, it has long since enlarged the field of its operations, carrying with it the sympathies and the support of a much larger number of Churchmen than at first espoused its interests. As intimated already, it affected the London Missionary Society to some extent, it drew off some of the original supporters of that institution, but at the commencement, as afterwards, it rallied round it Evangelical clergymen and laymen who never would have identified themselves with a thoroughly undenominational organization, or one largely conducted by Dissenting bodies.

Changes in methods of activity, described in the present chapter, were far more important and significant than is generally supposed. They took a large amount of religious work out of the hands of the Church, properly so called, whether in its established or its voluntary form, and entrusted that work to the care of societies each responsible *alone* to its own constituency. We see that not only did a number of Dissenters unite in some of these enterprises, but Churchmen did the same; and when they withdrew from early comprehensive institutes, to conduct others confined to their own particular views, they still proceeded upon the principle of independent action. They did not hold themselves responsible to the dignitaries of their own Church, except as those dignitaries became connected with them in associations voluntarily created and sustained. As corporate bodies they stood outside the Establishment, though as individuals the members remained within its enclosure. So likewise

Nonconformists simply as Christians, not as Church members, constructed methods of missionary and benevolent procedure, entirely free from any control exercised by the bodies to which they respectively belonged—so far at least as any real ecclesiastical authority could be concerned. An exception, however, occurs in the case of missionary proceedings amongst Wesleyan Methodists and Presbyterians ; with regard to other sections of Nonconformity the remark is undoubtedly true. There has thus come into existence a new mode of spiritual influence unanticipated by the Church of former days, whether Mediæval or Reformed, whether Anglican or Puritan, whether Presbyterian or Independent. Born in the eighteenth, it has marvellously grown in the nineteenth century. It is displaying now a force which, immense as it is, promises to be still more immense, outstripping in activity anything purely ecclesiastical. In Protestant Christendom the power of religion is becoming greater and greater, the power of the Church is becoming less and less. The fact is one which receives nothing like the attention which it demands.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A GENERAL review of the state of religion at the end of the last century, compared with what it was at the beginning, may appropriately conclude the history in these volumes.

A decided change occurred before the end in many Established and Nonconformist pulpits : a wave broke on shores of silence ; a fountain opened amidst the hills, watering dry and thirsty fields. The old Hebrew cry rose from the lips of not a few, " Watchman, what of the night ? " The echo was caught up and repeated in churches, chapels and barns ; it was a reaction against cold formality, indolence, and apathy ; also against the neglect of doctrines dear to Reformers and Puritans. Sermons had been argumentative, and the logic wrought in them, if not quite frozen, was very dry. Scarcely any attention was paid to popular requirements. Where style received attention, it took a polished surface adapted exclusively to ears polite. A hard manner of treatment prevailed amongst even the thoughtful and most earnest class of preachers. Bishop Horne amongst Churchmen, William Jay amongst Dissenters, wrought a decided and extensive change. Their sermons mark a transition period between the old and new in homiletic literature. We find in them less of argument and more of illustration ;

quiet sober fancy rather than great imaginative vigour takes the place of elaborate reasoning. Style became more didactic than logical, and piety insinuated itself through strains of affectionate statement and persuasive appeal. This method, whether from conscious imitation or from a spirit floating in the air, came to be widely adopted by preachers just before the commencement of the present century. Some, indeed, rose far above their brethren in eloquence and power. Horsley the Churchman, and Hall the Nonconformist, were men of erudition and eloquence, formed by nature to excel in any kind of oratory they might choose to adopt. Newton, Scott, Romaine, and others made themselves felt more through the richness of their Scripture knowledge, the homely force of their instruction, the common sense of their appeals, and their large acquaintance with human nature, than by any speciality of style or superiority of rhetoric. On the whole, volumes of discourses published at the end of the century afford a striking contrast to those issued at the beginning. The style of preaching which marked the spiritual revival both within the Establishment and outside of it has been often much misapprehended. Earnest appeals no doubt were made to the sinner's conscience, the Holiness and Justice of God were placed before the minds of people, the obligations of the moral law were enforced, and the consequences of disobedience and unbelief depicted in terrible forms ; but the mighty charm which gathered crowds and moved their hearts was found in what St. Paul calls the preaching of "Christ crucified." The love of God in sending His Son into the world, the self-sacrifice of that Son in life and death, the offering He made for human guilt upon the Cross of Calvary, His patience and tender-

ness, His mediation and intercession,—these were the themes which laid hold on the moral nature of Englishmen by thousands and thousands, and made them what the New Testament calls “new creatures in Christ Jesus.” It was the substance of the sermons more than the form and delivery which produced the effect. Earnest impassioned oratory can never explain what was accomplished. Employed on other themes it could secure no similar results. Twenty, thirty thousand people crowded together to hear the Methodist preacher: why could not the metaphysician and the moral philosopher do the same with his enchantments, and so, according to his own ideas, help to deliver his fellow-countrymen from what he called the bondage of superstition?

Extra services, and particularly public meetings, mark a further change in the popular religion of the day. Before the rise of Methodism, the Common Prayer Book and the written sermon were the only forms of religious utterance within the pale of an English parish; and the meeting-house witnessed little or nothing beyond formal Sunday discourses, the singing of Watts' and Doddridge's hymns, and the offering of extempore prayer. But Methodism carried preaching out of consecrated buildings into private houses, public halls, city streets, and village greens. It gave a new impetus to prayer-meetings on week-days; it led to gatherings for religious conversation. Classes and love feasts were not adopted by the old Dissent any more than by the orthodox Church; but a tendency to social spiritual engagements, beyond those of the stereotyped order, was, doubtless, one of the effects produced by the Methodist revival. Assemblies among religious people, such as we understand by the term public.

meetings, seem to have increased in the last decade of the century. Chairmen, secretaries, strings of resolutions, and a succession of speakers, come before us in connection with the birth of the London Missionary Society.

In September, 1795, Sir Egerton Leigh presided in the large room of the Castle and Falcon, when the ministers and laymen present received and considered a plan for the constitution of the new Institute ; and the next day people crowded within the doors of Spa Fields Chapel in such numbers, that multitudes remained outside, unable to gain admission. Sobs and tears accompanied the singing : and the place of worship close to which the Countess of Huntingdon, its foundress, had died four years before—not dreaming of such a new outburst of religious energy—became a scene of unprecedented excitement. A sermon, however, had been deemed essential to the solemnity of the occasion, and it was not until that had been delivered, that a meeting was held, and the plan of the Society propounded to the congregation. For some time meetings were modest affairs, supplementary to accustomed forms of worship. Movers and seconders of resolutions slowly took their places. The chair was kept in awe by the reading desk, and timidly the platform crept out under the shadow of the pulpit. Meetings were counted an innovation, and some old worthies looked upon them askance. Speeches were held in small esteem, and were put far below the level of sermons. Some of the brotherhood, powerful in the pulpit, would never make their appearance on a platform ; but by degrees the new instrumentality attained reputation and power. “The fathers and founders” did what Watts and Doddridge never dreamed of doing ;

and the former, in their turn, little thought of the Exeter Hall of the present century. The expenditure of an enormous amount of time and trouble upon committee business is of later origin.

Sunday Schools, founded by Raikes, took a new form before his death. Payments were at first made to persons employed in the instruction of the children. From 1786 to 1800, the Sunday School Society paid upwards of £4000 for that purpose, but unpaid labourers took a share in the good work before the death of their great leader and example in 1811; and the monitorial system had come into existence before 1794. In that year Raikes says to a friend: "In answer to your queries, I shall, as concisely as possible, state,—that I endeavour to assemble the children as early as is consistent with their perfect cleanliness—an indispensable rule; the hour prescribed in our rules is eight o'clock, but it is usually half after eight before our flock is collected. Twenty is the number allotted to each teacher; the sexes kept separate. *The twenty are divided into four classes. The children who show any superiority in attainments are placed as leaders of the several classes, and are employed in teaching the others their letters,* or in hearing them read in a low whisper, which may be done without interrupting the master or mistress in their business, and will keep the attention of the children engaged, that they do not play or make a noise." He adds, "Their attending the service of the Church once a day has to me seemed sufficient; for their time may be spent more profitably, perhaps, in receiving instruction, than in being present at a long discourse, which their minds are not yet able to comprehend; but people may think differently on this point. Within this month the minister of my parish

has, at last, condescended to give me assistance in this laborious work, which I have now carried on six years with little or no support. He chooses that the children should come to church both morning and afternoon; I brought them to the church only in the afternoon.”*

These institutions, now so popular, had then in some cases to encounter much opposition; and when the Nonconformists at Lancaster, five or six years after Raikes began his labours, imitated his example, the walls of the town were placarded with bills bidding the inhabitants beware, “lest the cunning people at High Street should kidnap their children.”† Sunday Schools, at first, sustained no close relationship to particular congregations. They were conducted in common by persons connected with different churches and chapels, on the new principle of extra parochial and extra ecclesiastical activity. The instruction given included the elements of reading, writing, and even arithmetic; Bible instruction for a while was much neglected. Religious knowledge was chiefly conveyed through catechisms; little room was allowed for the exercise of free religious conversation with the pupils, and the warm play of spiritual affections. Distinct schoolrooms rarely existed at first, children were taught in the pews or in the aisles, and not until after several years of this century had elapsed did the system take an elaborately organized form. Sunday Schools, as they are met with in the north of England, are creations of a comparatively recent date. But the foundations were laid nearly a hundred years ago; and Raikes opened an era in the religious efforts of England which has been followed on a still larger scale, and, it may be said, in a still

* “Gloucestershire Tracts,” Robert Raikes, 14.

† “Memoirs of W. Alexander,” by his Son, 34.

more brilliant style, on the other side the Atlantic. His work marks a notable point of progress in the middle of the reign of George III.; and as early as 1784, we catch an echo of joyful achievement in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. "The schools lately established at Leeds in Yorkshire, for the instruction of the children of industrious parents who keep them employed all the week, have been found to answer all the good purposes intended by those who formed the plan. There are, it is said, nearly 1,800 already admitted, and when the plan is completed there will be more than 2,000."*

Theological literature gave signs of progress at the close of the period which we have passed in review. No one would think of comparing it with such stores of Divinity as were laid up a hundred years earlier. In point of learning and intellectual vigour there was in some departments an obvious falling off; and as already noticed, no burning and shining lights appeared of the same order as had illuminated the middle of the century; yet theology, as a science, made some advance. The controversial work of Bishop Tomline threw no new light upon old Calvinistic questions; but Scott, his antagonist, grappled with them in a way superior to many of his predecessors, and evinced a common-sense mastery of the difficult subject, in connection with a strong and masculine apprehension of Evangelical principles. Bishop Marsh, as a critic, opened up a new field of investigation, through his acquaintance with German literature, and inquired into the origin and relation of the Four Gospels, also into the classification of Scripture MSS., after a manner somewhat new amongst English divines; and Dr. Hey at Cambridge, in his lectures on Systematic Divinity,

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, IV. 377.

on the whole surpassed his predecessors in acuteness, breadth, and impartiality. It is refreshing to turn from the dry and prolix dissertations of Ridgley, and even from the mathematical formularies of Christian knowledge in Doddridge, to the trenchant handling of dogmas, and the incisive style of expression adopted by the able Norrisean professor. In extensive reading, and in profound reflectiveness, he also went beyond Beveridge and Burnet, the two chief luminaries of the Church shining across the threshold of the last century. The Church Evangelicals, with the exception of Scott, were experimental and practical, rather than critical, systematic, or speculative. They simply sought to exhibit Divine truth so as to touch the consciences of their readers, and awaken within them religious affections ; and they accomplished their object after a manner which bears favourable comparison with authors in a like department three generations before.

Robert Hall, who has been described already, made, at the close of the last century and the beginning of the present, a deep impression upon the reading public, including distinguished literary circles, and thus he did more than any one else, since Watts and Doddridge, to raise the educational and literary reputation of Dissent ; but he can scarcely be said to have extended the boundaries of theological thought, or to have penetrated far into the depths of religious inquiry. Two of his Nonconformist contemporaries, as appears from what has been stated in a previous chapter, excelled him in this respect. Fuller and Williams, whatever may be said of the conclusions at which they arrived, must be regarded, if judged fairly, as amongst the most original and vigorous theological thinkers of their day. Fuller, it will be remembered, had little

learning, and perhaps the learning of Williams was not varied ; they had neither of them the depth of Butler, or the boldness of Warburton, but they investigated the foundations of Evangelical doctrine, and exhibited some of its aspects in a way which had not been previously attempted. Of the two, I should regard Andrew Fuller as the more effective and valuable teacher. Well known to Nonconformist readers, his reputation, I suspect, has not far extended within Church circles ; but I know that of late he has obtained attention in literary quarters, where his merits, before unknown, have received the admiration which they deserve.

It is worth while to notice the effect of American theology upon both these writers. Fuller, in a letter to Hopkins, a celebrated transatlantic divine, who has stamped his name upon a school of thinkers amongst his countrymen, remarks : "I have enjoyed great pleasure in reading many of your metaphysical pieces, and hope those who can throw light on Evangelical subjects in that way will continue to write. But I have observed, that whenever an extraordinary man has been raised up, like President Edwards, who has excelled in some particular doctrines or manner of reasoning, it is usual for his followers and admirers too much to confine their attention to his doctrines or manner of reasoning, as though all excellence was there concentrated. I allow that your present writers do not implicitly follow Edwards as to his sentiments, but that you preserve a spirit of free inquiry ; yet, I must say, it appears to me that several of your younger men possess a rage of imitating his metaphysical manner, till some of them become *metaphysic mad*. I am not without some of Mr. Scott's apprehensions,

lest by such a spirit the simplicity of the gospel should be lost, and truth amongst you stand more in the wisdom of man than in the power of God."* Fuller thought for himself, and having a keen eye for defects in the teaching of his day he here hit the right nail on the head. Williams was more receptive, and more disposed to become the disciple of another, adding to instructions he had received, comments, criticisms, and conclusions of his own. He could revere Socrates, but it was after the fashion of Plato. Williams adopted Edwards's theory of the will, with modifications and expansions quite original ; and at the same time showed the influence of an American, and the independent speculativeness of an English divine. Dr. Watts would have found in him a congenial spirit, and would have been delighted to listen to what he would have called his "ingenious" thoughts.

There were other teachers abroad of a very different character from Edwards. Kant and Lessing were beginning to be read in England at the latter part of the period under consideration. Lessing frankly acknowledged, "we have pulled down the old wall of separation, and under the pretence of making rational Christians have made most irrational philosophers." Again, speaking of the defenders and opponents of Christianity, he remarked : "It has often seemed to me as if these gentlemen, like death and love in the fable, had exchanged their weapons. The more closely one presses me with the proofs of Christianity, the more I am filled with doubts. The greater the insolent triumphs with which the other would trample it in the dust, the more disposed I feel to sustain it erect, at

* Quoted in Waddington's "Congregational Hist.," 1700-1800, 701. Where the letter is found does not appear.

least in my heart." Yet, with these signs of better things, Lessing could publish the celebrated Wolfenbüttel fragments, pronounced by no narrow-minded judge "the boldest assault yet made on the received faith of the Christian world, and particularly on the credibility of the resurrection." *

German writers of this school have had an appreciable effect upon English theology during the present century, but the tide began to set in at an earlier period. Spinoza was read by our countrymen, probably a small number, for a hundred years, chiefly that he might be refuted ; but few as his followers were for a long time, there could not be wanting even then some who sympathized in his spirit, and were influenced by his lucubrations. The Germans came within the acquaintance of English readers three-quarters of a century or so later, and early exerted a guiding power over inquisitive persons, such as William Taylor and his friends. For what are called rationalistic views of miracles, preparations had been made by Woolston and others ; and though repeatedly met and forcibly exposed, they did not disappear, but were reinforced by foreign as well as home influences, to be carried forward to later times. What, however, may be emphatically denominated the infidelity of England, at the time now referred to, was of indigenous rather than exotic growth. Hume and Gibbon, far beyond any Dutch or German writers, promoted disbelief in this country ; and among the vulgar Thomas Paine won a large following. Paine affords an extraordinary example of mischievous influence. In him a bottomless ignorance was associated with the cleverest audacity, expressed in the plainest words and idioms

* Taylor's "Religious Life of England," 309.

of his mother tongue, just in that way which tells effectively on irreligious and immoral people ; the number of his disciples was vastly increased by the identification of his infidelity with radical opinions, and by prejudice excited against Christianity, through those despotic principles which were upheld by certain rulers of the Church.

Between Church and Dissent relations were both friendly and unfriendly. Newton and Scott, we have seen, cultivated intimacy with Nonconformists ; some Evangelical clergymen preached in Dissenting pulpits : in the London Missionary Society, the Religious Tract Society, and the British and Foreign Bible Society, they united with probably more warmth and depth of affection than has been seen at any period since. In other provinces of beneficent action a still more comprehensive combination could be found.

To take the evidence of an impartial witness. "In achievements of practical philanthropy inspired by deep religious enthusiasm, the power of the Evangelical body both in and out of the Establishment has been conspicuous. One pleasing feature distinguished the grand movement against the slave trade, as if the Spirit of Christ had converted for once the gall of theology into the milk of human kindness. Its leaders were of all religious persuasions, and yet acted together in perfect harmony and with mutual esteem. The Evangelical Churchman and the Unitarian fought side by side against oppression, on the floor of the House of Commons ; and in the intervals of the strife Clarkson and Wilberforce, and Smith, Macaulay, Thornton, and Stephen took righteous counsel together in the communion of private friendship." *

* Tayler's "Religious Life of England," 301.

At the same time mutual relations might be met with of a different kind. A Yorkshire clergyman denounced Nonconformists in the bitterest terms, calling them wild beasts and savage brutes. They had been, he said, the greatest opposers of the most religious of the clergy, and to beguile the unwary introduced politics into their prayers, and employed their schism shops to stir up strife and sedition. They supported democratic candidates at elections, and circulated democratic publications in book clubs; begot by sedition they fostered an offspring of their own character, and with their superabundant piety were convicted of short weights and stinted measures. To finish the black list, they are called children of the devil.* Answers to such attacks were written with dignified forbearance, as well as with just indignation; but, no doubt, there were cases in which Dissenters failed to manifest the wisdom of meekness, and so provoked abusive retaliation.

Beyond ephemeral publications of local interest, very little issued from the press bearing on the main difference between Churchmen and Dissenters. Leading Evangelical Nonconformists were absorbed in the study of other questions. Robinson, of Cambridge, occasionally took up his pen to deal with ecclesiastical politics in his own trenchant style; but the book which to the end of the century took the lead in defending the principles of Nonconformity was "Towgood on Dissent." An able review of ecclesiastical establishments in Europe, by a Dissenting minister at

* These are words used in a Tract entitled "A Candid Enquiry into the Democratic Schemes of the Dissenters." This inexcusable publication indicates the political activity of the party assailed.

Newcastle, named William Graham, and published in 1792, was, I believe, the first book to break ground in that department of the grand dispute which has attained such large dimensions in the present day ; but twenty years elapsed before a second edition appeared.

As at the beginning, so at the end of the century, we can lay our hand upon the statistics of Dissent. Dissenters are stated by Dr. Edward Williams to be in comparison with Churchmen about one to eight, whereas a hundred years before they were about one to twenty-two.* The comparison, if accurate, shows a large increase. Some congregations are described as stationary, those among the less orthodox as on the decrease, whilst others were on the advance, both as to the size of the old and the creation of the new. Unitarian Dissenters are condemned for being political ; the orthodox are spoken of with favour for confining "themselves more to religion." Arianism is declared to be almost extinct, having become merged in Socinianism. One out of eight among Dissenters, it is said, belonged to the unorthodox division, and the writer goes on to observe that their struggles for greater enlargement of liberty made them obnoxious to government. "It is remarkable," he adds, "that amongst all their complaints of hard treatment noticed in their sermons and publications (which by the way are fondly nursed by the reviews in general) we hear of no extra meetings for prayer among them, nor humiliation before God, seeking relief from Him,—no, not during or after those riots in which they were the principal sufferers." † Williams was pastor of an Independent Church at Birmingham, and by thus plainly

* See Vol. IV. 202, 203.

† Gilbert's "Memoirs of Williams."

referring to his neighbour, Priestley, he shows that he cherished no sympathy with him in his political sentiments. Evangelical Nonconformists generally were at that period by no means conspicuous in the assertion of national rights. Nor did some orthodox Congregationalists look with favour upon their Wesleyan brethren. The latter were accused of being enemies. "They go to the greatest lengths," it is said, "in blaspheming our doctrine." The Independent preaching in a barn treated as a troubler one who said "horrid things of Calvinism." * The spirit thus manifested was as bad as that condemned.

An example of the order of Evangelical clergymen who carried over the work of revival into the present century has been given in the case of Charles Simeon. One more instance may fittingly conclude this general review. It indicates the stamp of piety and of teaching which had been received from recent influences, and which was carried over into the present century. Leigh Richmond entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in August, 1789, and received deacon's orders in the Church of England in October, 1797. He sympathized with Martyn and became a friend of Simeon's. The story of his conversion is a key to the life that followed, and had best be told in his own words. It occurs in connection with a reference to one of his children. Speaking of his son Wilberforce, he remarks: "He was baptized by the name of Wilberforce in consequence of my personal friendship with that individual, whose name has long been, and ever will be, allied to all that is able, amiable, and truly Christian. That gentleman had already accepted the office

* Waddington's "Congregational History." Continuation to 1850, 49.

of sponsor to one of my daughters ; but the subsequent birth of this boy afforded me the additional satisfaction of more familiarly associating his name with that of my family. But it was not the tie of ordinary friendship, nor the veneration which in common with multitudes I felt for the name of Wilberforce, which induced me to give that name to my child : there had for many years past subsisted a tie between myself and that much-loved friend of a higher and more sacred character than any other which earth can afford. I feel it to be a debt of gratitude, which I owe to God and to man, to take this affecting opportunity of stating that to the unsought and unexpected introduction of Mr. Wilberforce's book on 'Practical Christianity' I owe, through God's mercy, the first sacred impression which I ever received as to the spiritual nature of the gospel system, the vital character of personal religion, the corruption of the human heart, and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. As a young minister, recently ordained, and just entrusted with the charge of two parishes in the Isle of Wight, I had commenced my labours too much in the spirit of the world, and founded my public instructions on the erroneous notions that prevailed amongst my academical and literary associates. The scriptural principles stated in the 'Practical View' convinced me of my error ; led me to the study of the Scriptures with an earnestness to which I had hitherto been a stranger ; humbled my heart, and brought me to seek the love and blessing of that Saviour who alone can afford a peace which the world cannot give. Through the study of this book I was induced to examine the writings of the British and foreign reformers. I saw the coincidence of their doctrines with those of the Scriptures, and

those which the word of God taught me to be essential to the welfare of myself and my flock. I know too well what has passed within my heart, for now a long period of time, not to feel and confess that to this incident I was indebted originally for those solid views of Christianity on which I rest my hope for time and eternity. May I not then call the honoured author of that book my spiritual father? and if my spiritual father, therefore my best earthly friend?"

It would be difficult to find at the end of the eighteenth century men of exactly the same stamp as we find at the beginning. No doubt there remained numerous drones in the hive, some worse than drones; but clerical character in the Establishment towards the latter half, though not painted by contemporaries in brilliant colours, yet loses some of the darkest shadows which cross it during the former; and Non-conformist ministers, never charged with gross vices, or with much addictedness to the fashionable follies of the world, became much more earnest in their religious duties as time rolled on. A hundred years wrought a great change. Old-fashioned scholars, dry-asdust antiquaries in parsonage and manse, cosy, respectable, ease-loving teachers of different denominations, were largely disappearing. A new race had risen up. Religious revivalists, if not ecclesiastical reformers, were on the increase and coming to the front. Methodism was infusing its spirit into the minds of men who dwelt outside its borders. The names of Wesley and Whitefield, in the second quarter of the century reviled as "the filth of the earth and the off-scouring of all things," were in the fourth beginning to be pronounced with respect, and even with honour, by people altogether unsuspected of fanaticism. It

is true persecution had not come to an end, but the assailants of Methodist preachers on village greens, during the last ten years, did not equal in numbers and fury those who attacked and burnt Dissenting meeting-houses during the first ten years of the period. Also there were popery riots, and political riots in 1780 and 1791; but in breadth of extent, and as to sympathy evinced by the upper classes, they did not attain the pitch of popular excitement reached in the days of Daniel De Foe and Dr. Sacheverell.

Evangelical religion, by which I now mean Christianity as taught in the New Testament, plain, spiritual, practical—all gathering round the Life and Death of our blessed Lord—laid hold upon multitudes of Englishmen with a firmer grasp, and in a greater number of instances than ever. It was exhibited under the most benevolent aspects, as having regard to the temporal, together with the spiritual interests of man, as the helper of the poor, the friend of the prisoner, the liberator of the slave, the visitor of the sick, the comforter of the dying. A spirit of wide and varied philanthropy was developed, and multitudes came to feel that in more ways than one, the gospel brought good tidings of great joy unto all people. The impression was not evanescent. It lasted through a long lifetime, and grey-headed men and women, as they lay down to die half a century later, spoke with rapture of the words to which they had listened in the days of their youth. Nor did the cause expire any more than the effect. The speedy evaporation of this “religious enthusiasm” was predicted. The prediction remains unfulfilled. Systems of philosophy carefully and painfully elaborated in the closet, whilst the Christian preacher in the pulpit was doing his moral and spiritual

work, were studied by a few, and evoked from them admiring or destructive criticism, to share presently the fate of a long series of predecessors; but the gospel, which at the close of the last century demonstrated so much power, lives on still, and is at this moment the mightiest moral and religious factor amongst English people all over the world.

In history, as in commerce, the balance sheet is needed; losses and gains have to be reckoned up. Something was lost during a hundred years. The literary glories of the age of Anne passed away, through one of those inscrutable changes in history which perplex the philosophical student. There cannot be found in the reign of George III. the same amount of theological genius as in the reign of George II. Faith in Christianity, among the lower classes, received a ruder shock from Thomas Paine than it ever had from the critical attacks or sentimental speculations published by Collins and Shaftesbury. There was a wider separation, a more serious diminution of sympathy between class and class, especially in large English towns, after the outbreak of the French Revolution than before. Some of the measures of William Pitt, with a view to the suppression of seditious movements, especially the trials of the political martyrs of Scotland in 1793 and 1794, and the trials of Tooke and Thelwall about the same time, with the concurrent suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, wrought untold mischief amongst the middle and lower classes; directly, by increasing disaffection to Government, and indirectly, by strengthening a suspicion that religion is inimical to political freedom, because Church and State were arrayed against liberty of discussion. But very much more was gained than

lost in the eighteenth century. The revival of evangelical religion, popular preaching, Sunday schools, and new religious societies, were immense gains. They not only produced immediate effects conspicuous on the surface, but they penetrated efficaciously into the depths of society, so as to render the continuance of certain existing evils almost impossible. People had believed that killing and burning a calf would bring good luck into a parish, and cure murrain among the cows. A boy in the weald of Kent had fancied an exciseman, with an ink bottle at his button-hole, to be an officer of God Almighty, sent to take account of children's sins; and when Hannah More first went to Cheddar, she "saw but one Bible in all the parish, and that was used to prop a flower pot." * Such ignorance, superstition, and treatment of Scripture, could not but diminish before the work carried on by village evangelists, by Sunday school teachers, by distributors of religious tracts, and by visitors connected with the Bible Society. And beyond all this, multitudes were converted to the faith and the practice of the gospel, so as to live in virtue and benevolence, and die in the hope of eternal life.

* Stanhope's "History of England," VII. 332.

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